

CROOKLYN

by

Joie Lee

Cinque Lee

and

Spike Lee

child hood productions, inc.
and 40 Acres And A Mule Productions
4th Draft
June 8, in the year of Our Lord 1993
WGA East #075652-00

6/8/93-*Blue Revision !

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FADE IN:

TITLE - CROOKLYN, NEW YORK

THE EARLY 70'S

FADE OUT

THE BLOCK

CUT TO:

- 1 FROM HIGH ABOVE WE SEE a block of brownstone buildings
and we can make out 3 small figures running down the
street amongst much activity.

SLOW MOTION

Three boys (THE POSSUMS) GREG, GEORGE, and TRACEY glide
towards the camera.

ANGLE

Four old Puerto Rican men slap down their dominoes hard on
the table that rests on their legs. They all sit on milk crates.

HIGH ANGLE - A group of boys play "skelly" in the street.

ANGLE - STOOP

A group of girls jump double dutch.

SLOW MOTION

ON the feet of the girls as they jump.

- 2 EXT. STREET - DAY

ANGLE - AREAWAY

A MAN peeking through his gate in the areaway next door to
the teenagers. The clamor of dog barks is heard. This
is TONY MEYERS.

ANGLE - STOOP

An OLD ITALIAN WOMAN, FLORENCE and her MOTHER, MRS. COLOMBO,
sit in their areaway, drinking Schaeffer beer. Their old
dogs BLACKIE and BUTCH lay beside them. WE LOOK UP to their
stoop to see a YOUNG PUERTO RICAN MAN, HECTOR, tiptoeing out
of the door. Florence hears the door squeak and stands up.

2 CONTD

FLORENCE

Number Three! Number Three!
I run a respectable roomin'
house here and ya ain't paid
rent in two months.

2 CONTD

 HECTOR
I pay. I pay.

 FLORENCE
No mas! No mas!

 MRS. COLOMBO
Sonofabitch!

ANGLE - CAR

A group of PUERTO RICAN MEN stand around and lean against a Chevy drinking cerveza frio. Salsa music is blasting out of the car.

3 EXT. VESTIBULE - DAY

A group of CHILDREN peering into a window of a vestibule. They are pushing each other out of the way for a better view.

4 INT. VESTIBULE - DAY

Up against the wall a YOUNG BOY, CORNELL (10) is humping on a YOUNG GIRL, MONICA (10). Both are fully clothed. He smiles at the spectators who coax him on. His teeth are black stumps rotten down to the gums.

CLOSE - JOSEPH CARMICHAEL (AGE 7)

A young boy in the crowd, gazing through the window at the action.

CARMICHAEL CLAN

5 EXT. STREET - DAY

TROY CARMICHAEL (age 9), a skinny girl, small for her age, wearing an elaborate hairstyle of cornrows, beads and shells. She is standing in front of a stoop at bat. Two other boys are standing in the street, her brother NATE CARMICHAEL (age 10) winds up with a pitch, Troy swings and connects with a homer, much to the disdain of her brother. He watches the flight of the "Spauldeen" in the air.

In the distance we hear the sound of a muted horn.

6 EXT. CARMICHAEL AREAWAY - DAY

CLOSE - COW HORN

PULL BACK TO REVEAL MR. WOODY CARMICHAEL, a middle-aged,

6 CONTD

bearded man with big eyes, blowing the horn. He speaks with a southern accent.

WOODY

Dinnah!!!

He blows again. This time in the direction of the stoop.

ANGLE

Troy and Nate racing each other down the block.

ANGLE - STOOP

Teenage boys on stoop engaged in a game of Strat-o-matic baseball. One of the teenagers, TOMMY ZA -- half-Chinese, half Puerto Rican -- is playing 45's on a portable record player. CLINTON (age 15) and WENDELL (age 13) CARMICHAEL ignore their father while the other teenagers snicker. Troy and Nat run inside the house.

WOODY

Clinton! Wendell! C'mon.
Call Joseph.

7 INT. CARMICHAEL KITCHEN - DAY

Troy is setting the table. Her mother CAROLYN CARMICHAEL, a stylish, attractive woman in her early forties, also with a similar hairstyle as her daughter, stands at the stove, preparing the meal. SCHNITZEL, the family dachshund, stands underneath her. OFF SCREEN we can still hear Woody outside blowing his horn and calling the rest of his flock.

CAROLYN

Please go tell Nate it's time to eat.

She yells.

TROY

Nate! It's time to eat.

CAROLYN

I could have done that.

8 INT. DINNER - DUSK

The Carmichael Family sits around a round wooden table. This is the everyday commotion that happens at mealtime in this house, who sits where, etc. It's madness.

8 CONTD

Joseph chases Schnitzel around the table. Woody pours a 5 pound bag of sugar into a pitcher of lemonade. WE SEE the lemons floating in this cloudy liquid. He stirs and tastes it to see if it's sweet enough. It is. He licks the spoon, puts it back into the pitcher, and smacks his lips.

CAROLYN

Woody! That's enough sugar!

TROY

I wanna lemon, Daddy.

WOODY

C'mon, everybody, let's eat.
Sit down. Bow yo' heads.

TROY

Mommie, Clinton's sitting in
my chair.

CLINTON

C'mon, let's eat already.

WENDELL

Yeah, the food's gettin' cold.

CAROLYN

Be quiet.

JOSEPH

I'm not hungry.

WOODY

Sit down at the table with the
family, Boogie.

WENDELL

Yeah, the food's getting cold.

WOODY

C'mon now, everybody bow yo' heads.

CLINTON

Elbows off the table.

Nate, Troy and Joseph remove their elbows. Woody says
grace fast.

WOODY

Gracious Lord, we thank you for
this food. Amen. Pass yo' plates.
Mmm. Looks good, Gem.

8 CONTD

Woody carves one small, scrawny Cornish hen. OFF SCREEN
we hear muted Muzak playing over a cacophony of dogs
barking.

WOODY

Ah shucks, every time we sit down
to eat.

NATE

I just want white meat, Daddy,
and some potatoes.

CLINTON

Meat and potatoes, that's all
he ever eats.

NATE

Shut up.

CAROLYN

You're gonna eat some vegetables,
Nate. Stop biting your nails,
Troy.

Nate pokes out his mouth in disgust and shovels his
black-eyed peas to the edge of his plate.

WENDELL

Gimme dark meat. I like my
meat dark.

JOSEPH

Daddy! My peas are touching my
chicken!

ANGLE - WINDOW

George, Tracey and Greg perched outside the window look
in on the family.

TRACY

Ohh, look! They eatin' dinner!

GREG

What they havin'?

ANGLE - TABLE

CLINTON

Get outta here, ya possums!

8 CONTD

Troy gets up from the table and slams the shutters in the Possuns' faces.

 CAROLYN
 That was rude.

ANGLE - JOSEPH

He is sneaking Schnitzel his food underneath the table from hand to mouth.

ANGLE - WENDELL

He is smacking his food VERY LOUD. Carolyn clunks him on the head with her brass ring.

 CAROLYN
 Wendell! Please! And close
 your mouth when you chew.

 WENDELL
 Why can't I eat in peace for
 once?

 CAROLYN
 Because it's disturbing everybody
 else. You sound like a pig and
 you chew like a cow!

A chorus of "yeahs."

 WOODY
 Aw, c'mon, Gem. It's a compliment
 to ya good cookin'.

 CAROLYN
 Compliment, my foot. He's just
 plain greedy.

 JOSEPH
 I'm done.

 CLINTON
 He didn't eat nuthin'.

 JOSEPH
 I ate three peas.

Carolyn chuckles.

 TROY
 I'm full, too.

8

CONTD

Her plate of food is untouched.

WENDELL

See! Your eyes are bigger than
your stomach.

NATE

May I please be excused?

CAROLYN

No, you may not. You're gonna
sit here till you finish every
black-eyed pea on your plate.
And when I come home tonight I
want this kitchen clean.

CLINTON

See what you started, Nate.

NATE

Shoot. I hate black-eyed peas.

WENDELL

Aw, here we go.

CAROLYN

That's right. There's no reason
why your father and I should
have to be running around here
cleaning up after you shiftless
Negroes.

CLINTON

Daddy likes to clean up, don't
ya, Daddy?

WENDELL

Yeah, Daddy don't mind.

Woody, used to being teased by his two eldest sons,
grunts and continues to chomp on his food.

CAROLYN

Your father might not mind but I
do. I'm going with your father
to his gig tonight and this house
better be clean.

TROY

Stop teasing Daddy.

8

CONTD

WOODY

Thank you, Miss Coomish Mimmish.

Clinton talks to Troy under his breath.

CLINTON

Heifer.

CAROLYN

I heard that. Stop calling
your sister that. All of you
should mind, practically grown.
Don't you know James Baldwin
practically raised his brothers
and sisters by himself, when he
was a teenager.

VARIOUS ANGLES ON

Clinton, rolling his eyes into the back of his head.

Nate, staring at his black-eyed peas.

Troy, chewing on her fingernails voraciously.

Joseph, sucking a lemon.

Wendell, looking away, sucking his teeth, while trying
to disengage a piece of food.

CAROLYN (contd)

You hear that, Clinton. James
Baldwin was the eldest child,
more was expected from him. He
cooked, cleaned, baby-sat, sewed.
I'll be goddamned if I should
have to do anything but relax
I get home from work.

Woody lets out a long belch. She gives him a dirty look
as he continues to eat.

WOODY

'Scuse me.

OFF SCREEN we hear the Muzak getting louder. It is now
accompanied by a vocalist, the Carmichaels next door
neighbor, Tony Meyers. The louder his pitch and volume,
the louder the dogs howl.

8 CONTD

WOODY
Goddam sonofabitch. I can't
even enjoy my meal without that
Funky McNasty faggot ruining my
appetite. Shit!

Everyone laughs.

CAROLYN
Woodrow!

9 INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Troy is clearing off the dinner table. Joseph is sweeping
the floor, the broom twice his size. Nate plays the
piano while Clinton stands at the sink full of dishes.

CLINTON
Troy, it's your turn to wash
the dishes.

TROY
Liar! Mommy told you to wash 'em.

CLINTON
Shut up, wench. I'm the oldest.

TROY
You shut up, stupid.

CLINTON
Heifer. Wendell, it's your turn
to wash the dishes.

Wendell gazes into a mirror, picking out his 'fro with
an Afro pick. He sings.

WENDELL
Wanta Wazuri use Afro Sheen.
Man, I'm not cleanin' up nothin'!

CLINTON
Later, for you niggers. I washed
my one plate, my fork and my
knife.

10 INT. TROY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE - TV

An old b/w war movie. A combat scene, soldiers in battle
are being blown to pieces, bodies being riddled with
bullets.

10 CONTD

ANGLE

Clinton and Wendell are about 6 inches from the television laughing hysterically, rolling around on the floor as soldier after soldier gets blown to smithereens.

CLOSE - JOSEPH

He laughs on cue with Clinton and Wendell.

CLOSE - TROY AND NATE

They watch their older brothers with a blank stare, what's so funny about people getting maimed and killed?

11 INT. KIDS' FLOOR - NIGHT

WE PAN throughout the rooms to see:

CLOSE - CLINTON

He's asleep in bed, but with his lids open. His eyes are rolled back into his head.

CLOSE - NATE AND JOSEPH

Nate in the upper bunk, his feet hanging off the edge of the bed. Below, Joseph is asleep with Schnitzel sleeping on top of him.

CLOSE - WENDELL

He's underneath the covers, singing and rocking himself back to sleep.

12 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Troy slips out of her bed in her sleep, her eyes are closed and she walks out of her room.

13 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Troy is sleepwalking.

14 INT. NATE AND JOSEPH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Troy walks into their room, goes to the corner and pulls down her pants and starts to pee. That trickle-trickle sound awakens Nate.

NATE

Troy! Troy! What are you doing?
This isn't the bathroom.

14 CONTD

TROY

Oh!

She pulls up her pajamas and leaves the room.

15 INT. CLINTON'S ROOM - WAY PAST MIDNIGHT

Carolyn stands over Clinton, who's out. She snatches the covers off his sleeping body.

CAROLYN

Get up!

She starts to go on the Warpath.

CAROLYN (contd)

Are you crazy, Clinton? Didn't I tell you I wanted this house spotless when I got home?

Clinton rolls over in his bed and looks at the clock.

CLINTON

It's four in the morning.
Mommy, I'll do it tomorrow.

CAROLYN

Tomorrow nuthin'! Get your skinny-narrow ashy rusty behind outta this bed now.

Carolyn goes from bed to bed pulling the covers off each of her children who are already awake.

CAROLYN (contd)

Wake up! Get up! I want every-one downstairs now. I want this house clean, from top to bottom -- NOW!

16 INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

The five Carmichael kids file down the stairs, still half asleep and mumbling under their breath, Joseph who is crying bringing up the rear.

17 INT. KITCHEN - DAWN

Carolyn is overseeing the cleaning. All the kids are engaged in various activities: washing dishes, sweeping and mopping the floor, taking out the trash, etc.

17 CONTD

CAROLYN

From this point on all of you
will start pulling your own
weight. This isn't no hotel,
and you're gonna start cooking
too!

CLINTON

See, I told ya.

TROY

Mommy, Clinton only washed his
one plate, his fork and his
knife.

CAROLYN

Stop being a tattletale.

She then turns to Clinton.

CAROLYN (contd)

Clinton, you're gonna wash every
plate, fork, spoon, glass, pot
and pan for a whole month.

CLINTON

What about Wendell and Nate?
They don't ever do nuthin'.

NATE

Yes I do. I took out the garbage.

CAROLYN

Just worry about your own lazy,
shiftless self.

JOSEPH

Mommy, I'm hungry.

CAROLYN

That's too bad. The kitchen's
closed. You shoulda ate more
than "three peas."

Clinton and Wendell laugh and imitate Joseph.

CLINTON/WENDELL

I ate three peas. I ate three peas.

Joseph cries on cue, LOUD.

17 CONTD

CAROLYN

Stop teasing him. Joseph, stop that crying, you'll wake up your father. Clinton, what kind of example are you setting being the oldest? You're so immature.

Clinton mumbles.

CLINTON

I'd rather have a father than a mother any day.

WENDELL

Yeah, any day.

CAROLYN

What did you say?

JOSEPH

He said, "I'd rather have a father than a mother any day."

Carolyn grabs the broom and goes after both Clinton and Wendell, who dodge her easily. Schnitzel, thinking this is a game, barks and jumps up and down.

18 INT. TROY'S ROOM - MORNING

The house is quiet. Troy awake in her bed feels underneath her pillow and finds two peppermint candies. She pops both of them into her mouth.

19 INT. CAROLYN AND WOODY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Troy peeks into her parents' bedroom. Woody is sprawled out in the bed knocked out, snoring loudly. She tiptoes to the bed, then goes down on her hands and knees where her father's pants are on the floor. Troy carefully, quietly goes through the pockets, emptying them of all the change. As she sneaks out, Woody turns over and kicks the sheets off the bed, Troy goes back and gently tucks her father in.

20 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Carolyn is sitting in the barber chair drinking her coffee. Troy enters quietly.

CAROLYN

Good morning, ladybug. How are you today?

20 CONTD

TROY

Fine. How are you, Mommie?

CAROLYN

Good. Are you going to eat
some breakfast?

TROY

No thank you.

CAROLYN

Troy, I was thinking, how would
you like to spend a few weeks
with your cousin Viola in
Virginia once school is over?
Aunt Song and Uncle Clem asked
if you'd like to come down.

TROY

No thank you.

CAROLYN

Well, what do you want to do
this summer?

TROY

I dunno.

CAROLYN

I'll be teaching all summer and
you can't be running after your
brothers up and down the street
all day.

TROY

Would I miss my birthday?

CAROLYN

You would spend it with them.
Wouldn't that be nice? Please
eat some breakfast. I have to
go to work.

21 INT. TROY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Troy gets dressed for school. She reaches underneath the
bed to find a box of 100% sugar coated cereal.

21 CONTD

ANGLE

Troy sits in front of television watching a Deputy Dog cartoon while munching the cereal out of the box.

CLOSE - TELEVISION

Deputy Dog is doing his thing.

ANGLE - JOSEPH

He enters the room, followed by Schnitzel, who waits for any morsels to hit the floor.

JOSEPH
Oooh Trix. Can I have some?

TROY
Nope.

JOSEPH
Please!

TROY
I said no.

JOSEPH
OK, that's a bet. I'm telling
Mommie!

Joseph runs to the hallway and calls downstairs. Troy continues eating her cereal and laughing at the cartoon.

JOSEPH (OS)
Mommie! Mommie! Troy's eating
a whole box of Trix by herself
and she won't share any with me.

TROY
Mommie's not here, silly rabbit.

Wendell comes into the room, sees the cereal and snatches it and eating, munching loudly, also watching Deputy Dog. Troy's upset and tries to snatch back her Trix.

TROY
Wendell.

Wendell dodges her, box in hand. Troy chases him in a fit of rage. He's laughing.

21 CONTD

 WENDELL

 Look at your eyes poppin' outta
 yo' head.

Troy knocks the box out of Wendell's hand. The Trix
lands all over the floor and Schnitzel like a buzzard
starts to lap up the round, colorful bits. Troy pushes
Wendell, who retaliates by knocking her to the floor.

 TROY

 I hate your guts.

22 SCHOOL MONTAGE

With this MONTAGE, WE WILL SEE the Carmichael kids,
Clinton, Wendell, Nate, Troy and Joseph, in their school,
in their classes. WE SEE them doing what students do,
writing, looking bored, answering questions, etc.

23 EXT. KIDS - STREET - DAY

School is out, the block is lively.

ANGLE - SNUFFY AND RIGHT HAND MAN

walking down the block. Snuffy (18), a short guy with
a giant Afro, holds a paper bag in his hand. Next to
him walks Right Hand Man (20) who has only one arm,
his left. These two guys terrorize this block, picking
on the kids. They stop. Snuffy pulls out a tube of
airplane glue from his pocket and squirts a healthy
amount into the paper bag and places it over his mouth.
GLUE SNIFFERS.

CLOSE - SNUFFY

The brown paper bag expands and contracts as he deeply
inhales the fumes.

CLOSE - RIGHT HAND MAN

Right Hand Man takes the bag with his one good arm and
places it over his mouth. He gets his hit also. GLUE
SNIFFERS.

ANGLE - NATE

He's playing catch with a Puerto Rican boy, JUSTO.

ANGLE - JOSEPH

Joseph is playing with a slightly slow teenager, JEFFREY,

23 CONTD

much older than him. Joseph and his other friends are rolling down the block inside a discarded refrigerator box. Jeffrey, the drill sergeant, marches behind them barking out orders.

ANGLE - THE STOOP

Clinton, Wendell, RICHARD and his big butt brother RONALD and QUENTIN sit on the stoop playing Strat-o-matic baseball. Tommy is playing his 45's and sings along in a weak strained falsetto. He empties a bottle of soda and sends it flying. It crashes to the cement in Tony Meyers' areaway. Everyone laughs.

CLINTON

C'mon, man! Stop throwin' garbage down there. We always get blamed.

WENDELL

Yeah, man!

TOMMY

He should clean up his stinkin' house.

He stands up.

TOMMY (contd)

Hey ya stinkin' faggot. Why don't choo clean up after yo' friggin' dogs?

Richard, Ronald and Quentin laugh hysterically.

CLINTON

That stuff ain't funny.

WENDELL

Yeah, ya Chinese-Puerto Rican Chink-Spic.

TOMMY

Ya friggin' chocolate black Nigger moreno.

WENDELL

Your Mama.

TOMMY

Your whole generation.

23 CONTD

The Peanut Gallery chimes in, "ooing" and instigating. Tommy makes his way up the stoop towards Wendell as Clinton comes between them.

CLINTON

Come in, Tommy. Wendell.
Squash it.

TOMMY

Why you let your brother call me that? I don't say nuthin' bad 'bout yo' Moms. I loves Mrs. Carmichael.

CLINTON

It's over. Forget it. Play your music.

Tommy goes back down the stoop and sits back down.

CLINTON (contd)

See, Wendell, why do you always have to start?

WENDELL

He started. I finished it.

Tommy Za points at Quentin's sneakers.

TOMMY

*Rejects, they cost a dollar 99.
Rejects, they make your feet
feel fine.*

The others join in on the chiding.

RICHARD

Oh snap. MO's.

RONALD

What does MO stand for?

WENDELL

M-O-tations.

RICHARD

Hey Quentin, look at your brother Jeffrey playing with those little kids.

RONALD

Yeah, he retarded or something?

23 CONTD

QUENTIN

Shut up, buddybutt.

ANGLE - JEFFREY

His mop handle is raised in the air as he marches down the block with a queue of small boys half his size and age following behind him step by step. Cornel, the boy seen earlier humping the little girl, is in line, along with Joseph also. The marching drill sergeant and his soldiers approach the stoop.

CLOSE - TOMMY

Tommy, with his back to the kids, quickly turns just as the army is passing, displaying a look of horror with his eyelids flipped up and inside out.

ANGLE - KIDS

They scream with fright and run off as Jeffrey tries to gather his dispersing troops.

ANGLE - OUINTIN

He runs after his brother Jeffrey deeply embarrassed. The teenagers all laugh and see VIC POWELL, a young black Vietnam vet. He's dressed in army fatigues, combat boots and a black beret. He walks with a long stride, accented with a little bounce. As he approaches the stoop everyone makes a clear path to let him through. Even Tommy turns down the music on his record player (a great honor) as Vic gives everyone some skin. The teenagers are in awe.

WENDELL

Black Power, my number one Soul
Brother Vic.

24 EXT. ANOTHER STOOP - DAY

Troy, DIANE (13), her youngest sister CATHY (11), their cousins BRENDA (12) and POOCHIE (10) who speak with country southern accents and a Puerto Rican MINNIE (13) are all hanging out on Diane and Cathy's stoop.

ANGLE - DIANE

Diane sits with a tomato in one hand and a salt shaker in the other. Each time she takes a bite she pours a ton of salt on the tomato.

ANGLE - GIRLS

They are examining Troy's hairstyle.

24 CONTD

DIANE

It look funny.

POOCHIE

It look stupid.

TROY

So ... so does yours.

POOCHIE

At least my hair don't look all
funny like yours.

TROY

At least mine isn't standing up
on my head stickin' straight out
looking like Topsy.

POOCHIE

Well, I don't know who no Topsy
is, all I know is it looks stoopid.
I dunno why I can't stand you.

TROY

I dunno why I can't stand you either.

BRENDA

Poochie, why don't you be quiet wit'
you ole black self?

Poochie and Troy eye each other. Cathy starts stroking
Minnie's hair, which is long and straight.

CATHY

She got good hair.

DIANE

She got Peter Rican hair.

MINNIE

Stop touching me, ugly.

Minnie, irritated, moves away.

DIANE

Don't choo be calling my sistah ugly.
I'll slap you inna next week.

MINNIE

Ya ain't gonna slap nobody!

DIANE

Go eat some Goya beans.

24 CONTD

POOCHIE

I can't stand you either. Minnie,
ya think you so cute.

MINNIE

So! Later for choo.

BRENDA

C'mon y'all, who wants to jump
rope.

ANGLE

The girls jumping rope and singing.

GIRLS

*All, all, all in together, girls,
How do you like the weather, girls?*

OFF SCREEN and over the girls singing we hear the Possums
chanting:

THE POSSUMS

*Rashie Moustachie! Rashie Moustachie!
Doodlee-Doo! Doodlee-Doo!*

ANGLE - THE POSSUMS

The three brothers Greg, George and Tracey come near the girls singing louder. Tracey has a stray cat by its tail and is swinging it above his head in a circle. The girls try to ignore them and also sing louder. Tracey throws the cat on Diane, who's terrified of them. She screams, jumping up and down, with arms flailing. She tries to run but she's surrounded by the boys getting tangled up in the rope.

THE POSSUMS (contd)

*Rashie Moustachie! Rashie Moustachie!
Doodlee-Doo! Doodlee-Doo!*

The boys laugh and point at Diane's mouth, where she has a scaly rash. Poochie steps in and pushes Tracey. Tracey pushes her back and the shoving match ensues. Tracey and Poochie stand face to face, shoulder to shoulder, bumping each other, going around in a circle. Diane jumps in and pushes Tracey.

GREG

Slap that Black Monkey.

BRENDA

Why y'all always gotta be bothering
us?

24 CONTD

MINNIE

Shoot! They better not touch me.

The Possums now turn their ridicule to Troy.

TRACEY

Ah. She look like she looks ...

GREG

... look like a gorilla.

TROY

Shut up, Greg. Look at you
with your welfare self. How
many times have you been left
back? You stoopid ass dummy.

Troy has hit the right nerve and Greg is hurt.

GREG

So?

TROY

So. Your mother's a ho!

CLOSE - SNUFFY AND RIGHT HAND MAN

They are in a glue sniffing induced euphoria -- HIGH AS A
KITE.

SNUFFY

Who has some money for Snuffy
and my main man Right Hand?

ANGLE - THE KIDS

All the kids start yelling and screaming and run for their
lives down the block. Right Hand Man tries to grab Troy
with his one good arm.

RIGHT HAND MAN

We need some money.

SNUFFY

We'll get it.

25 EXT. STREET - DAY

Tommy Za with wrench in hand turns on the johnny pump full
blast. With a hollow tin can placed over it, he shoots
the water up into the air.

ANGLE - AREAWAY

Florence and her mother Mrs. Colombo stand guard, sipping
beer from cans.

25 CONTD

FLORENCE

Hey! Hey youse. Turn the
water off.

TOMMY

Besa mi culo!

FLORENCE

Don't think I dunno what that
means. You gotta smart mouth,
ya know that.

TOMMY

Ah. Go back inna house with
your ole combat boot wearin'
mother.

FLORENCE

Don't youse talk about my mother.
Ya know what you are? You're
a goddamn troublemaker. Don't
ever live on this block.

MRS. COLOMBO

Sonofabitch. Troublemakers.
All of dem. Call the cops.

TOMMY

So, I don't live on this block,
what about it? What ya gonna do?

WENDELL

Yeah, what are ya gonna do.
You don't own this block.

FLORENCE

You too? Carmichael, yo' mother's
a nice lady. I'm gonna tell her
about you.

WENDELL

Go 'head, be my guest. She don't
like ya anyway.

CLINTON

Why don't you take your mother
inside before she has another
heart attack.

FLORENCE

I'm callin' the cops. I'm callin'
the cops.

25 CONTD

MRS. COLOMBO
Sonofabitches. Call the cops.

Defeated, they go inside.

CLOSE - TOMMY

Tommy aims directly towards across the street with a full blast.

26 INT. TONY MEYERS' HOUSE - DAY

The bespectacled, middle-aged white man stands at the window as the water hits his house. Tony is clad in tight high-water polyester bellbottoms that's topped off with a bad looking toupee. As he backs away, WE FOLLOW the chinks of light sneaking through the missing slats on the shutters to illuminate a dimly lit dust covered room, cluttered with faded and yellow stained overstuffed furniture; books and newspapers are piled high in corners and petrified mounds of dog shit are everywhere. Throughout the house are dozens upon dozens of matted, mangy haired muted colored poodles. We hear the constant barking of these poodles blending in with the Muzak.

ANGLE - TONY

He paces the room, and accidentally steps on a dog who lets out a yelp, and comes to a framed picture on the wall hanging askew.

CLOSE - PICTURE

Photograph of an older woman who resembles Tony. It's his mother.

CLOSE - TONY

TONY
Why did ya have to leave me
here all alone?

27 EXT. STREET - DAY

Tommy, Wendell, Clinton are at the fire hydrant. Tommy stands blocking the water with his body.

ANGLE - TONY

Tony emerges from his house and stands at the top of his stoop, shaking his fist.

27 CONTD

 TONY
Stop that. Turn it off or I'll
call the police.

 TOMMY
Call the police. Ya Maricon.
You should thank us. We givin'
ya stinkin' house a bath.

 WENDELL
Why don't you clean up after
your dogs?

The kids holds their noses.

 CLINTON
We can't even sit on our own
stoop or use our backyard --
without havin' to smell that
stink.

 TONY
My house does not smell. Yours
smells. I happen to have the
cleanest house on the block.

 CLINTON
You're crazy.

 TONY
After I call the police, I'm
going to tell your parents.

Tommy gets behind the hydrant and sprays a fleeing Tony
with a wet blast.

28 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Tony Meyers' house is still wet.

CLOSE - FIRE HYDRANT

A stray dog drinks from the hydrant, only now WE SEE a
sprinkler cap bolted onto it.

29 INT. CARMICHAEL HOUSE - NIGHT

Dishes are being cleaned off the table. Joseph and
Schnitzel are running around the kitchen. Clinton and
Wendell argue over whose turn it is to wash the dishes.
Troy sweeps the floor. Nate is sitting at the table alone

29 CONTD

with his mouth poked out staring down at a handful of black-eyed peas which stare right back at him, while Carolyn hovers above him. Mr. Carmichael enters with a brown paper bag.

 WOODY
Desserts, anybody? I got ice
cream and sand cake.

The kids gather around the table and Woody empties the contents of the bag.

 CAROLYN
I don't want them eating that
junk

 WOODY
Aw, come on, Gem, it's just a
little sand cake.

Nate reaches but is stopped by his mother.

 CAROLYN
Uh-uh, you don't get nuthin'
till you eat them peas!

 NATE
Man! How come every one else
gets to have some. Shoot!

 CAROLYN
I'll save you a piece, Doctor.

Nate mumbles.

 NATE
How come we gotta eat black-
eyed peas, every night? I hate
black-eyed peas. Black-eyed peas.
Black-eyed peas. Dag!

CLOSE - TROY

She smiles at Nate while playfully eating her dessert.

CLOSE - CLINTON AND WENDELL

They both hold up their ice cream and cake before Nate's mouth. Wendell, as usual, is smacking loudly on his food.

 WENDELL
Sure is good. So tasty and delicious.

29 CONTD

CLINTON

Take a bite. So moist, so sweet.
C'mon, Red.

NATE

Mommy! Clinton called me Red.

CAROLYN

Clinton, you're so immature.

CLINTON

Red, Red, pees in the bed.

Clinton and Wendell holler at their joke at their light skin brother's expense.

ANGLE - JOSEPH

He generously pours a five pound bag of sugar into a glass of water. As he drinks from the glass, Schnitzel reaches up to the table and snatches Joseph's cake and runs off into a corner. Joseph chases him.

JOSEPH

He ate my cake. Schnitzel ate my cake.

CAROLYN

You didn't need that junk anyway.

WOODY

Here, Boogie, here's a brand new piece.

NATE

Daddy, that was my piece.

WOODY

Oh, I'm sorry, Doctor.

CAROLYN

Nate, I am tired of standing here and waiting for you. Pick up that fork and eat. Now.

CLOSE - NATE

He reluctantly picks up his fork and slowly shovels the black-eyed peas onto it. The fork is trembling.

29 CONTD

ANGLE - TABLE

The Carmichael Family stops to watch this one.

CAROLYN

Eat it.

CLOSE - NATE

His eyes are closed, his hand trembles and a painful expression is on his face. Nate takes a deep breath. As the fork with three black-eyed peas just barely touches his lips, he stands up and throws up all over the table. Everyone clears out except Woody.

CAROLYN (OS)

Nate. You better clean up that mess.

30 EXT. CARMICHAEL STOOP - NIGHT

Wendell is taking out the garbage. As he places the trash inside the cans, he starts picking out chicken bones, empty cans, etc. and hurls them over into Tony Meyers' areaway.

ANGLE - WINDOW

Tony sees this and runs outside.

ANGLE - CARMICHAEL STOOP

TONY

I saw you. Stop throwing that garbage in my areaway.

WENDELL

Hey, I didn't throw nuthin', man. You imagining things.

TONY

I'm calling the cops.

WENDELL

Good. Why don't you let the cops inna ya house and let 'em see how you live. Ya filthy pig.

TONY

Who's a pig? You're a pig.

(MORE)

30 CONTD

TONY (contd)

You come from a family of pigs.
And don't think I don't see you
kids throwin' your trash in my
areaway and in my backyard also.

WENDELL

Shut the hell up. That's a lie.
How dare you talk about my family
like that. You should be shot.

Carolyn barges onto the scene, racing from inside, followed
by Clinton, Nate, Troy and Joseph.

CAROLYN

Wendell, be quiet.

TONY

I caught him throwing trash
onto my property. He's the
ringleader. He makes the other
kids that sit on your stoop do
the same.

CAROLYN

How dare you accuse my son of
ill doings. He does nothing of
the kind.

TONY

Yes! Yes! It's him and that
one.

Tony points to Clinton.

CLINTON

We don't do nuthin' to you or
your stinkin' house.

CAROLYN

My kids and their friends can't
even sit our stoop, let alone
play in our backyard without
having to smell that disgusting
foul odor of dogs emanating
from your house. Why don't
you clean up that filth?

TONY

What filth? My house isn't
filthy. Yours is.

30 CONTD

CAROLYN

You are a menace and a disgrace
to this entire block. And the
board of health should shut you
down.

ANGLE - THE POSSUMS

Tracey, George and Greg are laughing and point to Tony.

THE POSSUMS

Highwaters. Highwaters.
Where's the flood?

ANGLE - TONY

Tony Meyers' pale, white bloated ankles bulge out from
below his high-water bellbottom pants.

TONY

You're the one who disturbs
the peace around here. I never
had trouble with nobody till
you people moved in.

Carolyn points her finger at him.

CAROLYN

Listen here, you poor excuse
for a man. You ought to be
glad we moved in. And if I
ever hear you calling my kids
names or accusing them of
anything, you're gonna have
to deal with me. See!

ANGLE - TROY, NATE AND JOSEPH

They jump up and down at their mother's threat.

ANGLE - TONY

He becomes hysterical, moves towards Carolyn and starts
to wave his finger in her face. Carolyn's kids come to
her defense.

CAROLYN

I beg your pardon.

TONY

You killed my mother. Murderer.

30 CONTD

CLINTON

You better get out of my mother's
face.

WENDELL

Back off.

CAROLYN

Kids, get in the house. This
man is crazy as a betsy bug.

They protest.

TONY

Murderer! Murderer.

TROY

He called you a murderer.

ANGLE - VIC POWELL

He comes out of the Carmichael doorway.

VIC

Mrs. Carmichael, you alright?
This fool givin' you trouble.

CAROLYN

That's alright. We're going in
now.

TROY

He called Mommy a murderer.

CAROLYN

Troy.

Vic goes directly to Tony.

VIC

Are you crazy?

TONY

She, they all killed my mother.

VIC

You too afraid to deal with a
man?

And before Tony can answer Vic slaps him across the face

30 CONTD

knocking his glasses off. Tony in a state of shock falls to his knees and scrambles like a blind man for his glasses.

TONY

My glasses. I'm gonna sue.
My glasses. I can't see.

Troy picks them up and hands them to him before Carolyn pushes her children into the house.

ANGLE - THE POSSUMS

Greg, Tracey and George on their knees mimicking Tony Meyers. *

ANGLE - FLORENCE AND MRS. COLOMBO

They help Tony to his feet.

FLORENCE

You should press charges.

MRS. COLOMBO

Sonofabitches. I'm calling the cops.

31 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Troy is lacing up her sneakers. She tiptoes out of her room.

32 EXT. CARMICHAEL'S STOOP - NIGHT

Troy looks around from the top of her stoop. She takes in a deep breath, spits into Tony Meyers areaway and tears off running down the block. *

33 INT. BODEGA - NIGHT

A lively, colorful atmosphere. Salsa music blasts from the speakers as an older Puerto Rican man dances by himself. Other men mill about drinking cerveza frio and speaking Spanish to each other. In the center of the store is a young but worn out looking toothless, saggy breasted black woman in HOT PINK hot pants, with a blonde afro wig; she laughs. *

ANGLE - TROY

Troy enters the store, out of breath, and walks down the aisle. She grabs two bags of potato chips and goes over to the counter to pay for it.

33 CONTD

TROY'S POV

The black woman dancing seductively with the Puerto Rican man. He whispers something into her ear.

WOMAN

I ain't no puta. I keeps my pussy clean.

The other men laugh.

ANGLE - JUAN

Troy is transfixed. Juan, the man behind the counter, slaps the counter.

JUAN

Mira, Mommy. Come on. Feety cents.

TROY

Hold your horses. Gimme a Hershey bar plain, no with almonds, some lemon heads and ten bazookas.

Troy pays her money, takes her chips and candy, and walks to the door still staring at the woman when she bumps into the wall. The woman and men laugh, and Troy runs out the Bodega.

34 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

As Troy walks down the block to her stoop, the red lights of the police car are flashing.

ANGLE - STOOP

Vic Powell in handcuffs is being led by cops on each side into the car. They are followed by his beautiful Puerto Rican girlfriend JESSICA.

CLOSE - VIC

He looks at Troy.

CLOSE - TROY

TROY

You going to jail?

34 CONTD

CLOSE - VIC

VIC
For the night.

ANGLE - STOOP

Troy runs up the stoop and into the house.

35 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Troy enters the room, turns on the light and is surprised to find her four brothers and Schnitzel all lounging on bed watching television at a very low level.

TROY
What are you all doing in here?
Get off my bed.

CLINTON
You missed it.

WENDELL
The cops came and took Vic away.

TROY
I know.

CLINTON
Eggies!

TROY
I called no eggies first.

WENDELL
When?

TROY
... eh, when I bought it.

NATE
Well, that don't count, we
couldn't hear it. Eggies!

TROY
You never give me anything.

CLINTON
Shut up, you evil-flat-chested
wench.

35 CONTD

TROY

Just for that, you're not
getting any and I'm telling
Mommy ya called me a evil-
flat-chested wench.

CLINTON

Go 'head, tell. You are a
evil-flat-chested wench.
I'll tell her ya ran out to
the store.

TROY

Nigger.

CLINTON

Pop-eyed heifer.

Wendell snatches the bag from her and empties it onto the
bed. Everyone except Nate grabs the candy.

JOSEPH

Oh sweat. Lemon heads.

TROY

Alright, you greedy pigs.

NATE

I don't want any. Just be
quiet so I can watch TV.

CLINTON

You shut up, you high-yalla
Nigger.

WENDELL

Yeah. Red, Red, you pees in bed.

NATE

That's a bet, Nigger.

Wendell imitates Nate.

WENDELL

That's a bet, Nigger.

Troy comes to Nate's defense.

TROY

He' just mad because you can
beat him up.

Wendell smacks Troy. She smacks him right back.

35 CONTD

CLINTON

All of you Niggers be quiet
before you wake Mommy.

Everyone chills and goes back to watching television.

CLOSE - WENDELL

He's smacking on his candy.

ANGLE - BED

CLINTON

Why you gotta eat so we can
all hear it? Please chew
with your mouth closed.

A chorus of "yeah's."

WENDELL

Don't start up on me, four four-
eyed punk.

CLINTON

Yeah, I'm a four-eyed punk now
but who do you call when someone
is kicking your ass?

TROY

Please, be quiet.

WENDELL

I don't need you to fight my
battles.

CLINTON

Good.

WENDELL

Good. So shut up!

Troy screams.

TROY

Enough, get off my bed and outta
my room.

CAROLYN (OS)

What's going on up there? What's
all that noise? Is the TV on?

Silence.

35 CONTD

CAROLYN (OS contd)
I said is the TV on?

The kids are frozen, looking at one another. Clinton jumps off the bed and turns the TV off.

CLINTON, NATE,
TROY AND JOSEPH
(in unison)

No!

36 INT. BODEGA - DAY

The store is as active during the day as it is at night. The regulars sit around and eye Minnie. Juan is chasing kids out of the store.

ANGLE - MINNIE

Minnie stands over the freezer, digging around the ice cream and popsicles. Juan comes up from behind her and pulls her ponytail.

JUAN
Hey, Mommy. Dame una besa.

MINNIE
Dejalo stupid.

ANGLE - TROY

She wanders up and down the aisle, looking around. She picks up a bag of Bon Ton potato chips, hesitates, then puts it back.

ANGLE - MINNIE

Minnie walks past Troy with popsicle in hand and slips it under her shirt. She goes to the next aisle past the smiling men and exits the store.

ANGLE - TROY

Troy stuffs a bag of potato chips into her shirt and walks past the smiling men to the door. The bulge in her shirt is obvious.

JUAN
Hey, mira. Where you think you going, eh?!

Troy is busted.

36 CONTD

JUAN (contd)

You think you can come in here
and steal from me. Do I go
into your house and steal from
you? Eh?

TROY

No.

JUAN

Twenty-five cents!

Troy, embarrassed, looks around and pulls the chips from
under her shirt.

TROY

I don't have any money.

JUAN

Wha? No money? Den get out
and don't come back until you
got some money.

Juan shoves Troy out the door.

37 EXT. BODEGA - DAY

Minnie is waiting outside for her licking her popsicle.

MINNIE

What took you so long?

Troy shrugs, she's on the verge of tears.

MINNIE (contd)

Ya let him catch you?

TROY

What was I supposed to do?

Minnie sucks her teeth.

MINNIE

Look, you shoulda tole him, "I
don't have to steal nuthin' from
you. I just forgot my money."
See?

TROY

Oh!

37 CONTD

ANGLE - PEANUT

Peanut (10) a girl passes between Troy and Minnie followed by a group of boys. Peanut turns around, laughs and points at Troy and their eyes meet.

PEANUT

Looka that funny hair.

THE FIGHT

38 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE - TV

A basketball game is on, the New York Knicks are playing.

COMMENTATOR (VO)

Playing guard, number 10!
Walt "Clyde" Frazier.

ANGLE - BED

Wendell, Nate, Clinton, Joseph and Schnitzel lounging on the bed looking at television. Clinton is glued to the set, right smack dab in front. He is wearing a Knicks jersey with a number 10 on it with FRAZIER lettered on the back. Clinton turns up the volume.

CLINTON

Oh yeah! My man, Clyde.
We better win tonight.

39 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Troy is facing herself in the mirror examining her breasts. She profiles and sticks out her chest. Nothing, flat as a pancake, not yet.

40 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Woody is sitting at the piano composing. He has a pencil in his mouth and the music paper in front of him. Carolyn walks from behind holding some papers.

CAROLYN

Goddamnit, Woody. You bounced another check.

He starts playing louder.

WOODY

I'll get some money.

40 CONTD

CAROLYN

When?

WOODY

Just let me play my music.

CAROLYN

That's what I've always done.
The problem is your music isn't
bringing anything into this
house but music.

Woody continues to play.

WOODY

Gem, the money will come.

CAROLYN

Baby, I use to think that,
that's why I started to teach
again, to support you and your
music and so we can eat.

WOODY

Gem, keep on doing what you're
doing.

CAROLYN

I am but, baby, you've got to
realize we're on a limited budget.
I'm trying to balance everything.
When you go out and write some
checks and don't tell me about
it, it's making it extremely
difficult.

WOODY

Everything will be cool.

CAROLYN

Cool. I went and opened up a
separate bank account.

Woody stops playing the piano, stops composing and turns
around and faces his wife for the first time in this
conversation.

WOODY

Gem, now why did ya do a crazy
thing like that?

40 CONTD

CAROLYN

So your kids can keep a roof
over their heads and food on
the table.

41 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clinton is running in circles, ecstatic over a play.
OFF SCREEN we hear Woody and Carolyn arguing.

CAROLYN (OS)

Clinton! Clinton!

CLINTON

What?

Clinton continues to watch the game.

CAROLYN (OS)

Stop answering me what, dammit.
Turn the goddamn TV off.

CLINTON

I'm watching the Knicks.

CAROLYN (OS)

I don't care what it is! No TV
on a school night.

NATE

You better turn it off.

WENDELL

What's she all mad about now?
Mommy's always screamin'.

CLINTON

She can scream all she wants to,
I'm watching this game.

ANGLE - JOSEPH

He knocks on the bathroom door.

42 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Troy is rolling up big balls of tissue paper and stuffing
them in her shirt.

TROY

Inna minute.

43 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Carolyn bursts into the room, goes straight to the TV set and turns it off. Clinton, stunned, jumps up as if his air supply has been cut off and turns it back on.

CLINTON

C'mon, Mommy. The Knicks are on.

WENDELL

Yeah, what's the big deal?

Carolyn turns the TV back off and commences to yell.

CAROLYN

The big deal is I said no TV
damnit. I'm gonna go throw
this thing out the window.

Woody comes into the room.

CLINTON

Daddy, she won't let me watch
the game.

CAROLYN

Don't you dare go to your father
and defy me.

WOODY

C'mon, Gem, let him watch his
game. Let's go downstairs.

Woody takes an irate Carolyn gently by the arm and tries to lead her out of the room.

CAROLYN

Don't touch me. Don't touch me.

WOODY

Let's go downstairs.

CAROLYN

Get your hands off me. This
is my motherfucking house. I
pay Con Ed for the electricity
and I say NO TV. When you start
bringing in some money then you
can say what goes on around here.

Everyone is silent. Clinton shakes his head, and turns it back on. Carolyn goes for Clinton, and Woody tries to get her out of the room.

44 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Troy is listening to the bedlam.

TROY

Oh God. Please no more fights.
No more fights.

45 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

All hell has broken loose. Everyone is screaming at the top of their lungs. Carolyn is at the top of the stairs while Woody tries to grab her feet and get her down the stairs. Clinton, Wendell and Nate are trying to pry their parents apart. Joseph, who is on the top landing, is jumping up and down and crying. Schnitzel is barking loudly. In the middle of all this is Troy, with her arms outstretched between her parents. She pleads.

TROY

Please stop it. Stop it.

Carolyn, kicking and screaming, tries to hold on to the banister for dear life.

CAROLYN

Get off me, you no good black
bastard. Get offa me.

WOODY

Come on now, let go.

CAROLYN

Nate, call the cops.

TROY

Daddy, please stop. You're
hurting Mommy.

Wendell tries to grab hold of Woody, who now has ahold of both Carolyn's feet. She is now seated and goes down each step with a thump. Every time she descends a step she screams out louder in pain. Clinton stands above her trying to pull his mother back up the steps. Nate jumps on top of his father's back and pounds him.

NATE

Get off my mother.

CAROLYN

Oh my God! My ankle.

TROY

Clinton, see what you did?
See what you started?

45 CONTD

 CLINTON
It ain't my fault.

 TROY
Yes it is.

 CAROLYN
Get out of my house. You better
call your brother and have him
come get your shit, black bastard.

46 INT. CARMICHAELS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carolyn is sitting on the bed nursing a bruised ankle
with an ice pack. Nate sits beside her on the bed.
Troy stands at the door. We hear the doorbell ring
and Schnitzel barks.

 WOODY (OS)
Hey Clinton, Nate.

Troy looks at her mother and Nate. She hesitates and
then leaves.

47 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

BROWNE, Woody's younger brother, slaps Wendell five.
Woody has Joseph in his arms as Troy enters the room.

 BROWNE
Hey, Miss Coomish Mimmish.

 TROY
Hi, Uncle Browne.

 BROWNE
You ready to go?

 WOODY
Yeah. Where's Clinton and Nate?

 TROY
Nate's with Mommy.

Woody puts Joseph down. Browne picks up Woody's bag as
Troy bites her nails.

 WOODY
Ok, Boogie. I'll see you soon.

He slaps Wendell five.

47 CONTD

WOODY (contd)
Alright, Miss Commish Mimmish,
give Daddy a hug.

Troy hugs her father.

CAROLYN (OS)
And leave the keys to my car!

48 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clinton sits in front of the TV watching the game with the
sound turned off.

CLOSE - TV

The game has just ended and WE SEE the score. The Knicks
have lost... And we FADE OUT.

49 OMIT

50 INT. CARMICHAEL BEDROOM - MORNING

Troy knocks on the door and enters the room with a tray.
Carolyn is sitting up in bed.

TROY
Good morning, Mommie, how are
you today?

CAROLYN
Fine, thank you, Ladybug.

Troy places the tray down and sits on the edge of the bed.

TROY
I made you some coffee and toast.

CAROLYN
I see, thank you.

50 CONTD

The doorbell rings and Schnitzel barks.

51 INT. VESTIBULE - MORNING

Troy goes to door with Schnitzel and sees her father holding a rose in a vase and a sealed card with "Gem" written on it. Her face brightens. She goes and opens the door, and Schnitzel follows.

52 EXT. STOOP - MORNING

Schnitzel jumps up on Mr. Carmichael. Troy sits down on the stoop with her father.

WOODY

Hey, Mr. Schnitzel.

TROY

I cleaned the kitchen, Daddy,
and cooked Mommy breakfast.

WOODY

That's nice, that's real nice.

TROY

I think she's feeling better now.

WOODY

Oh yeah. That's good. Your
father is sorry about last
night.

TROY

It's not your fault, Daddy.

Woody laughs to himself.

WOODY

Daddy doesn't want to fight,
yell, scream or holler. All
Daddy wants to do is play his
music. That's all.

TROY

Well, maybe you could play
other people's music.

He sucks his teeth.

WOODY

I'm not gonna play other people's
music.

52 CONTD

Troy tries something different.

 TROY
Maybe you should take Mommy
out sometimes, like a date.

 WOODY
You think so?

 TROY
Yeah, I do.

She looks at her father.

 TROY (contd)
Are you coming in?

 WOODY
Not just yet, just wanted to
bring these by. Everybody
else ok?

 TROY
I guess.

 WOODY
Alright, Miss Coomish Mimmish,
Daddy loves you. Go give this
to your mother.

He hands Troy the vase and walks off, singing to himself,
down the block.

53 INT. CARMICHAEL BEDROOM - MORNING

Troy knocks on the door and enters with Schnitzel.
Carolyn is drinking her coffee.

 CAROLYN
That dog is gonna outlive me.

 TROY
This is from Daddy.

Carolyn looks at the vase.

 TROY (contd)
Aren't you going to open it?
Daddy told me to tell you he
wants to take you out on a
date.

53 CONTD

CAROLYN

Ladybug, whatever you do, don't
ever marry a musician. Just
make me that one promise.

TROY

Mommie, can I have a quarter?

CAROLYN

Go ask your father.

54 INT. CLINTON'S ROOM - DAY

WE SEE a huge autographed poster of Walt Frazier perched
in a peacock chair wearing a full-length mink coat, wide
brim fedora and platform shoes. WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL
a typical teenager's sports fanatic's room.

ANGLE - TROY

Troy pulls out Clinton's buffalo nickels from a blue coin
collectors book and pockets all of them. Tacked to a
corkboard Troy notices two tickets for the Knicks
game at Madison Square Garden. She takes those also.

55 EXT. STREET - DAY

Kids are running up and down the walk. Clinton, Wendell
and Richard are playing stickball in the street. Tommy Za
is on the stoop dancing to salsa music playing from his
portable record player. We hear Mr. Softee's tinny theme
blast from the truck's system. Out of Troy's hand spill
the rare buffalo nickels onto the counter of the Mr. Softee
Ice Cream truck. Troy and Minnie walk away, each holding
double ice cream cones, vanilla on one side, chocolate on
the other.

ANGLE - TROY AND MINNIE

Licking their ice cream cones they walk down the street
and pass two girls their age, SHEILA and VICKI.

SHEILA

Hi, Troy the boy.

Troy stops dead in her tracks, hands her cone to Minnie.

TROY

Hold this.

Troy goes over slowly to Sheila and punches her in the
face. Sheila is more stunned than hurt. Troy walks back
to Minnie, who hands her back ice cream cone.

55 **CONTD**

TROY (contd)

 Thanks.

MINNIE

 Good for her.

56 **INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY**

Troy and Minnie are finishing up their ice cream cones.
Minnie is gazing around the house.

MINNIE

 I still say y'all are rich.

TROY

 No, we aren't.

MINNIE

 Yes, y'all are.

Clinton walks in from outside sweating and goes straight
to the refrigerator ignoring them.

MINNIE

 I gotta go home. Thanks for
the ice cream.

Minnie leaves uncomfortably. Clinton goes upstairs.

ANGLE - TROY

She sits at the table tinkling the keys. **OFF SCREEN** we
hear Clinton upstairs screaming.

CLINTON (OS)

 Where's my tickets?

57 **EXT. STOOP - DAY**

Clinton yells out the window.

CLINTON

 You've seen my tickets?

WENDELL

 Nope, wasn't me.

58 **EXT. STREET - DAY**

RICHARD

 Oh shoot. You can't find the
tickets. You promised to take
me.

58 CONTD

ANGLE - WINDOW

CLINTON

Shoot. I know, man. Can't find them.

CLOSE - RICHARD

RICHARD

Well, keep looking.

59 INT. CLINTON'S ROOM - DAY

CLINTON

Troy. You seen my Knicks tickets?

TROY

Nobody cares about your stupid tickets.

She laughs.

CLINTON

What's so funny?

TROY

Oh nothing.

Clinton eyes her suspiciously.

CLINTON

Troy, if you have my tickets I'm gonna break your neck.

TROY

Break it then.

60 EXT. STOOP - DAY

The kids on the stoop look up to the window hearing loud crashing noises, shouts and screams.

61 INT. CLINTON'S ROOM - DAY

Clinton has Troy in a yoke hold.

CLINTON

Where my friggin' tickets?

TROY

I'm not tellin'.

61 CONTD

Clinton tightens his hold.

 CLINTON
Where my tickets?

 TROY
Ow. You're hurting me.

Troy begins to cry.

 CLINTON
Gimme the tickets and I'll
let you go.

 TROY
Why should I? You started
the whole fight between Mommy
and Daddy.

 CLINTON
Just gimme the damn tickets.

 TROY
It's all your fault.

He tightens his grip once again. Troy screams.

 TROY (contd)
Ok! Ok! Take your stupid
tickets. Nigger, I hate your
guts.

 CLINTON
Heifer.

Clinton lets his sister go. She reaches into her sock
and pulls out the tickets which he snatches.

 TROY
I spent them funny lookin' nickels
of yours also.

Clinton goes to his blue coin collector's book. It's empty.

CLOSE CLINTON

He screams INTO THE CAMERA.

 CLINTON
Mommy!

HOT PEAS AND BUTTER

62 EXT. STREET - DAY

Nine different sneakers converged, WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL Troy, Diane, Cathy, Poochie, Brenda, Tracey, Greg, Minnie and Pablo. Troy counts and points with her index finger around everyone's foot.

TROY

*There's a German in the grass
With a bottle up his ass,
Stick it in, stick it out,
Do you wanna be a scout?*

Troy has stopped on Poochie's foot.

POOCHIE

I don't wanna be no scout.

TROY

N-O spells no and you are not
it.

Tracey pulls his foot out.

TRACEY

Ah-ha.

63 EXT. FLORENCE'S AREAWAY - DAY

Florence and her mother are sitting in lawn chairs drinking beer. Their dogs, Blackie and Butch, lay at their heels panting. Mrs. Colombo is having difficulty opening her can.

MRS. COLOMBO

Howda hell do they 'pect me
to open dis wit' my art'ri's.

FLORENCE

You think he liked the chicken
cacciatore?

MRS. COLOMBO

Howda hell do I know?

FLORENCE

That Meyer. I cook him a whole
pan of cacciatore cuz I feel
sorry for him. Ma, he don't
got nobody to cook for him, but
he don't even return my pan.

63 CONTD

 MRS. COLOMBO
 Dat sonobitch.

CUT TO:

64 INT. TONY MEYER'S HOUSE - DAY

WE SEE a pack of many poodles eating out of the pan on the floor.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. FLORENCE'S AREAWAY - DAY

 FLORENCE
 He kinda reminds me of my third husband.

 MRS. COLOMBO
 Who, dat bum Johnny?

 FLORENCE
 No, Ma! Jim. Johnny was number two.

 MRS. COLOMBO
 Dey was all bums.

 TRACEY (OS)
 Hot peas and butter. Better come and git your supper!

66 EXT. STREET - DAY

In the midst of playing "Hot Peas and Butter," the kids are scattered along the sidewalk, throwing garbage can lids to the curb. Everyone is looking for that belt. Greg who is "it" stands near calling out instructions.

 GREG
 Ahh. You cold. You all cold.

Tracey runs into the areaway of Tony Meyers.

 GREG (contd)
 He warm. Getting warmer.

Pablo, Diane, Cathy, Brenda and Poochie look up and down towards Tracey. They tear off the lid of Tony Meyers' trash can, knock the trash over and sift through it. Some of them hold their noses. Troy and Minnie hang back near base.

66 CONTD

GREG (contd)

Getting hot.

TROY

I'm not going in there.

MINNIE

Y'all are nasty.

ANGLE - WINDOW

Tony Meyers looks through his shutters.

ANGLE - AREAWAY

Diane finds the belt behind one of the trash cans and immediately starts swinging.

FLORENCE

Hey you friggin' kids. Get outta there. Carmichael, I see you.

ANGLE - GATE

Tony stands on the other side of his gate as his dogs bark.

TONY MEYERS

Get away from here. Look what you did.

POOCHIE

You ain't my father.

TONY MEYERS

Get off my property.

POOCHIE

You don't tell me what to do wit' your ole stank self.

ANGLE - SIDEWALK

TROY

See, I told you.

BRENDA

Come on now, Poochie. Didn't I tell you not to mess with that crazy man.

TRACEY

I know he ain't talking to me.

66 CONTD

GREG

I'll give him a Bruce Lee chop!

Greg demonstrates his pseudo Bruce Lee martial arts for Troy and sings.

GREG (contd)

Everyone was Kung-Fu fightin'!

Troy runs off and is followed by Greg.

ANGLE - CARMICHAEL AREAWAY

TROY

Stop following me, Greg.

GREG

I ain't followin' you.

66A INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Carolyn is seated in the barber chair. Troy runs in.

CAROLYN

Troy, I need to ask you something.

TROY

Yes, Mommie?

CAROLYN

Clinton claims that you stole his prized collection of buffalo nickels. Those are very valuable and mean a lot to him. Did you take them?

TROY

No.

67 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

We hear a toilet flush and Troy exits the bathroom, she turns towards the window.

ANGLE - WINDOW

Carolyn and Greg are in conversation. We cannot hear what's being said, but by the look on her face she is not pleased and comes inside.

68 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Troy tries to sneak up the stairs.

CAROLYN

Troy.

Troy stops on the steps.

TROY

Mommie, somebody left the toilet seat up and I almost fell in again.

CAROLYN

Never mind that. I do not believe what I just heard.

Troy turns around, but avoids looking into her mother's eyes.

CAROLYN (contd)

Why are you calling people's mothers names?

TROY

I didn't.

CAROLYN

Don't lie to me. Why is that child standing outside with crocodile tears in his eyes? I want you to go back outside and apologize to him right this minute.

Troy stomps her way outside.

69 EXT. CARMICHAEL AREAWAY - DAY

Greg stands with his head down as Troy and Carolyn come outside.

TROY

Sorry, Greg.

He's gonna milk this one.

GREG

You sorry why?

TROY

I'm sorry I called your mother a ho'.

69 CONTD

GREG

And you sorry, you teased me
'bout gettin' left back three
times. And 'bout bein' on the
welfare?

TROY

Alright, already. I'm sorry.

GREG

You better be.

Troy gives Greg a dirty look. Greg waves at Carolyn?

GREG (contd)

Thank you, Mrs. Carmichael.

Greg runs down the block. Troy tries to go after him but
is stopped by her mother.

CAROLYN

Where do you think you're going?

She hands Troy a booklet of food stamps and a grocery list.

CAROLYN (contd)

I need you to go to Met Food and
pick up some things for dinner.

TROY

Mommie. I hate food stamps.
We ain't on the welfare.

CAROLYN

Stop saying ain't. And you
should be glad we have food
stamps. Now, go on.

TROY

Mommie, please, everyone is
gonna laugh at me.

CAROLYN

Ain't nobody going to laugh
at you who isn't on welfare
themselves.

TROY

How come I have to go?

CAROLYN

You want to eat tonight. Now scat.

69 CONTD

ANGLE - STREET

Troy spits into Tony Meyers areaway, then stomps down the street. She passes the other kids on the block who are running around playing. She gives Greg the evil eye. *

70 INT. MET FOOD SUPERMARKET - DAY

A lively, untidy, ghetto supermarket. As Troy walks through the aisles pushing her shopping cart WE SEE punctured food bags, opened bags of cookies, rotten produce, etc.

ANGLE - MEAT SECTION

Troy stands at a bin holding a package of liver. She stuffs the package down her pants.

ANGLE - PRODUCE

Troy pockets a bulb of garlic, small onions and some lemons. OFF SCREEN we hear some STATIC.

ANGLE - CHECKOUT COUNTER

Peanut is being forced to empty her pockets by a West Indian store manager. From under her shirt she pulls out candy bars, potato chips, and sodas. Troy watches with the other customers. She and Peanut make eye contact.

PEANUT

Go 'head. Call my mother.
I ain't got no phone.

MANAGER

Go home. And don't nevah come
back in 'ere!

The manager grabs Peanut by the collar and escorts her out.

PEANUT

Git your hands off me.

Before she's pushed out she spits on the floor.

PEANUT (contd)

Coconut!

MANAGER

Pickaninny.

70 CONTD

ANGLE - AISLE

Troy sees Peanut being frisked and she's scared, but she uses the diversion. *

ANGLE - CHECKOUT COUNTER

Troy walks by the checkout person at the register and flashes a big a smile. *

TROY

I'll be back. I forgot my money. *

71 EXT. MET FOOD SUPERMARKET - DAY

Troy leaves the supermarket and Peanut steps INTO FRAME facing her. *

PEANUT

Got anything good, ya ugly bitch? I saw ya in there. *

Peanut goes for Troy, trying to take the goods she has hidden in her clothes and her food stamps. Troy is blindly swinging, defending herself as Peanut grabs at her hair and rips her clothes. It's a CAT FIGHT, arms and legs flailing. The manager runs out of the store and pulls them apart (just in time for Troy cuz' she was in the process of getting an ass whipping). Troy is crying. *

MANAGER

'Ey. 'Ey. No fighting in front of my store. Go wan' now.

PEANUT

She started it. How come she can steal and I can't? *

Peanut jerks away from the manager, dives for Troy's food stamps and splits. The manager helps Troy gather her goods.

72 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY

Carolyn is sitting in the barber chair drinking a cup of coffee while she combs Joseph's nappy head. Troy drops the goods on the table. *

TROY

Here.

CAROLYN

What in the world happened?

72 CONTD

Carolyn jumps up from the chair, dropping Joseph.

TROY

I told you not to send me.

CAROLYN

Lord have mercy. Who did this?

TROY

I knew something would happen.

Troy stomps around the kitchen followed by Schnitzel.

CAROLYN

Tell me who did this?

TROY

And she took the change.

73 EXT. STOOP - DAY

Greg, Tracey, George, Diane, Cathy, Poochie and Brenda are sitting on the Carmichaels' stoop talking loud and arguing.

POOCHIE

I'm glad she got her butt kicked. I shoulda been kicked her butt my damn self.

TRACEY

Oh shut up, you ole ugly black baboon.

74 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Troy holds a bucket under the bathtub faucet.

75 EXT. STOOP - DAY

POOCHIE

I know you ain't talkin' to me.

DIANE

Me either.

GREG

Oh be quiet, with your ole rashy moustachie self.

BRENDA

Why you always gotta be callin' people names?

75 CONT'D

 GREG
Cuz, I feel like it. And nobody
can do nuthin' 'bout it. You
rashy ...

Before Greg can finish his sentence, the bucket of hot scalding water cascades from above, soaking him from head to toe. He is screaming, and runs around like a chicken with its head cut off.

ANGLE - WINDOW

Troy hangs out of the window with empty bucket in hand.

 TROY
And stay off my stoop.

76 EXT. BACK OF CARMICHAEL HOUSE - NIGHT

ANGLE - FIRE ESCAPE

Wendell, Tommy and Quentin are climbing up the fire escape. Quentin slips and Tommy catches him.

 WENDELL
Be quiet, man. I don't want
my moms to hear us.

They continue up the steps and Wendell who's leading halts.

 TOMMY
C'mon, man, keep going.

 WENDELL
Shhh. I hear something.

Wendell pops his head up, looks into the window and quickly brings it back. His mouth is agape.

 TOMMY
What is it?

 QUENTIN
What?

Wendell motions to them. They all move onto the landing and peer into the window where they see Vic Powell and Jessica making love. Vic is on top, humping away. Jessica is writhing, moaning and screaming in ecstasy. She is also talking in Spanish.

77 INT. VIC POWELL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE - WINDOW

Wendell, Tommy and Quentin have their faces pressed up against the window with eyes bulged.

TOMMY

Oh snap. He's getting down hard.

WENDELL

That's my main man.

QUENTIN

Oh my God, we shouldn't be watching this.

WENDELL

Then don't watch.

Quentin stays put.

QUENTIN

Move over, man.

78 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Nate is playing a Scott Joplin rag on the piano. Joseph is chasing Schnitzel around the table.

79 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

In a dark room, Troy lies in bed, sweating profusely, she's delirious.

80 DREAM SEQUENCE

It's night time on Myrtle Avenue, the streets are desolate. Troy is running for her life. She's being chased by Snuffy and Right Hand Man. They call out after her and are gaining speed. Troy screams, the Glue Sniffers surround her. Snuffy inhales from his brown paper bag with glue and Right Hand Man sticks his good arm out at Troy.

TROY

Glue Sniffers, leave me alone.

SNUFFY

Where's our money?

TROY

I don't got no money. Only got food stamps.

80 CONTD

RIGHT HAND MAN
We take those too.

TROY
Our family needs it for food
to eat.

SNUFFY
We need it for our glue. Don't
you want a little sniff?

Snuffy moves closer to Troy with the bag. Right Hand Man
grabs her and Snuffy places the bag over her mouth.

SNUFFY (contd)
Breathe in. Breathe out.

Troy starts to elevate from the ground, she rises, floats
up into the night.

81 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE - WOODY

WOODY
Hey, Miss Coomish Mimmish.

He sits on the bed with Troy, dabs her face with a damp
cloth.

WOODY (contd)
How you feelin'?

TROY
I'm flying.

Troy smiles in her delirious state.

TROY (contd)
Daddy, I'm glad you came home.
You take Mommy out yet?

WOODY
Not yet.

TROY
Take her out, Daddy.

WOODY
Get some rest.

Troy shuts her eyes. He takes some peppermint candies
out of his pocket and places them under her pillow.

82 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Woody is at the bottom of the stairs, clanging the cow bell.

83 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - MORNING

Mr. Carmichael dishes up a breakfast of slimy, runny eggs, salmon croquettes soaked in grease, thin sliced potatoes, watery grits and burnt toast.

CAROLYN

I don't see why our kids should have to be alienated from the rest of your family.

Clinton and Wendell sit down at the table.

WENDELL

Hey Daddy, welcome back.

WOODY

You go to the game?

CLINTON

Yeah, Knicks won.

JOSEPH

Daddy, you burnt the toast.

WOODY

That ain't burnt, thas just a little dark.

He takes the charred toast, scrapes the black charcoal off with a knife and smears a pound of margarine and grape jelly on it.

CAROLYN

Woody, you're gonna give us all heart attacks.

Nate looks down at the slimy, runny eggs on his plate.

NATE

My eggs are runny.

CAROLYN

Celeste has had Sam, Joan and Viola out to St. Louis and never invites our kids.

WOODY

Ain't studying Celeste. She's mean and evil.

83 CONTD

All of the kids laugh.

 CAROLYN
Woodrow, that's your sister.

 CLINTON
I don't want to visit Aunt
Celeste either.

 WENDELL
Me too.

 CAROLYN
Oh be quiet. No one's talking
to you.

 WOODY
Shoot. We don't need to visit
nobody. We got the car, we can
go for a drive.

Clinton and Wendell laugh.

 CAROLYN
But let's leave Brooklyn.

Troy stands at the doorway.

 WOODY
Hey, Miss Coomish Mimmish, you
feeling better?

Troy smiles and sits at the table.

 TROY
Hi, Daddy.

 CAROLYN
You feeling better, Ladybug?

 TROY
Yes, thank you.

 CAROLYN
Stick out your tongue.

Troy sticks it out.

 CAROLYN (contd)
Ohh. Brush your tongue, girl,
it looks like a white fur rug.

83 CONTD

 WOODY
C'mon, everybody. We goin' for
a drive after you finish breakfast.

 CAROLYN
And clean up.

 WOODY
And clean up!

 JOSEPH
Can Schnitzel come, Daddy?

 CLINTON
What is this? One big reunited
family?

 WENDELL
Shut up.

 CLINTON
Make me.

 WENDELL
I don't make monkeys.

 CAROLYN
Both of you shut up.

Woody gets up from the table, clearing the plates singing.

 WOODY
*Roll on Citreon, roll on.
Roll on down that road.*

84 EXT. AREAWAY - MORNING

The entire Carmichael family is leaving the house. Woody
is still singing loudly.

 JOSEPH
I got a front window.

 CLINTON
You're sitting in the back.

 CAROLYN
You can sit up front with me.

85 EXT. STREET - MORNING

A Con Edison truck is parked in front of the Carmichaels'
house.

85 CONTD

WOODY

Hey 'scuse me. Can I help you?

He looks at the address on the stoop.

CON ED MAN

This is 165, right?

WOODY

Yes, it is and what are you doing?

He shows Woody his papers.

CON ED MAN

I have orders to shut off the
electricity, you gotta pay ya
bill.

He goes down into the manhole.

ANGLE - CARMICHAEL FAMILY

The clan is frozen solid.

ANGLE - TONY MEYERS' DOORWAY

Tony Meyers stands at his doorway watching.

86 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Vic Powell and Jessica enter the dark house and see
candles placed in the corners. Schnitzel, coming out
of nowhere, charges after Vic going for his crotch.
Vic kicks Schnitzel with his combat boots and he
scampers away yelping.

JESSICA

Vic.

VIC

Damn dog went for my nuts.

Woody comes out his bedroom holding a lit candle and
meets them before they go up the steps.

VIC (contd)

Hey, Mr. Carmichael, did y'all
blow a fuse or something?

WOODY

Uh, yeah. I was waiting on y'all
to get home ... You see, we're

(MORE)

86 CONTD

WOODY (contd)
having a little uh, financial
problems right now, and uh,
well ...

JESSICA
Yes, we understand. I was hoping
that the food stamps helped.

WOODY
Food stamps? Oh yeah, right.

JESSICA
Please tell Mrs. Carmichael that
I'll be able to get some extra
ones next month also if you
need 'em.

WOODY
Sure, sure. Anyway, like I was
saying, we didn't blow no fuse,
the damn electricity has been
cut off.

VIC
Come again.

WOODY
We ain't got no electricity and
neither do you.

VIC
Come on, Mr. Carmichael, is this
some kind of joke?

JESSICA
How do you expect us to live?

WOODY
Now. Now. It won't be for long.
Probably for just a few days
till we can get straight.

VIC
Ain't that a bitch. I'm paying
good money for rent and ain't
got no lights.

WOODY
I can give y'all some candles.

VIC
Ah hell.

86 CONTD

JESSICA

Mr. Carmichael, I hope you don't expect us to pay rent.

WOODY

Well now, Miss Jessica, I don't know about no "us," cuz you don't even live here, but I do expect Vic to pay.

VIC

I coulda stayed in jail. Let's get outta here.

JESSICA

I didn't have to give your wife those food stamps, you know.

They make their way up the staircase. Woody watches them.

WOODY

Well, you still got gas and hot water.

87 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It's a candlelight dinner for the Carmichael clan as they huddle around the table eating cold chicken out of a cooler.

WOODY

Mmm, this is good. I like my chicken cold.

CAROLYN

Well, I don't.

Carolyn sucks her teeth and gives her husband a dirty look. Troy watches closely this interaction between her parents.

TROY

I do. This is fun.

JOSEPH

Does this mean we can't watch TV?

WENDELL

That's right. No cartoons.

87 CONTD

CLINTON

And no "Brady Bunch" and "Partridge
Family" for Troy and Nate.

NATE

I don't watch that show, Nigger.

CAROLYN

Stop calling each other Nigger,
damnit.

TROY

And you can't watch the Knicks.

WOODY

C'mon, everybody, let's just eat
in peace. Daddy's got good news.
I'm giving a concert.

There is a long, uncomfortable silence.

WOODY (contd)

It's gonna be good. Gotta
sell some tickets.

CLINTON

Gimme a roll.

CAROLYN

Don't you have any manners?

CLINTON

Gimme a roll please.

Carolyn pulls the dinner rolls out of the cooler and slams
them down on the table in front of Clinton.

CLINTON (contd)

They're frozen solid.

CAROLYN

Heat 'em up then.

CLINTON

Forget it.

TROY

I wanna roll.

Troy grabs a roll and walks over to the stove.

87 CONTD

CAROLYN
Be careful lighting the
stove, Troy.

ANGLE - STOVE

In the dark Troy tries to light the stove. She turns the gas on to "broil." She strikes a match, sticks her head in the oven and the match dies out. Troy lights another match and drops it into the hole, waits for the broiler to ignite ... it doesn't.

JOSEPH
Mommy, I have to go to the
bathroom.

CAROLYN
Well, go on.

JOSEPH
But it's dark in there.

CAROLYN
There isn't anything to be
afraid of.

TROY
I can't light the stove.

Nate gets up from the table, walks to the oven, sticks his head in and lights a match.

JOSEPH
What if something bites me?

Suddenly an ORANGE FLASH lights up the room. Nate didn't know Troy left the gas on. The family looks toward the stove. Nate and Troy run INTO THE FRAME screaming. Nate's eyebrows and eyelashes are singed off. Nate is jumping up and down like a madman. Troy, who is unharmed, is also crying.

CAROLYN
Oh my goodness. Nate. Troy.
What happened?

WOODY
Goddamn.

NATE
Troy left the gas on.

87 CONTD

TROY

I didn't mean to.

Carolyn holds Nate, trying to calm him down.

CAROLYN

It's alright. You're not hurt.

Clinton looks at Troy.

CLINTON

See what you did.

TROY

I didn't mean to. It was an accident.

Woody is now examining Nate.

WOODY

It ain't that bad. Ya just got singed.

CLINTON

It could have burned his entire face off.

Nate starts screaming again.

CAROLYN

Clinton, you're not helping.

WOODY

C'mon, Doctor, it's over now.

CAROLYN

Goddamnit to hell. I'm tired of living like this. I'm tired of being poor. I'm sick of this raggedy ass house and Brooklyn. I'm sick of all you Niggers. One day y'all wake up and I'll be long gone.

CLINTON

See what you started.

TROY

It wasn't my fault.

WOODY

We know it wasn't your fault.

DOWN SOUTH

88 EXT. STREET - DAWN

TOMMA ZA

Don't you worry, Mrs. Carmichael.
I look after the house. Every-
thing will be under control.

CAROLYN

Thank you, Tommy, and call those
numbers if you need us.

TOMMY ZA

Nobody is sitting on this stoop
till you get back.

ANGLE - CITROEN STATION WAGON

Woody ties the last bit of luggage to the rack on top
of the car. Carolyn gets in the front, Clinton and
Wendell have windows on either side with Nate, asleep
squashed in the middle. Troy and Joseph are in the
rear also asleep.

ANGLE - STREET

The car pulls off down the street.

CLOSE - TOMMY

He waves.

89 INT. CAR - NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE.- MORNING

Woody starts to sing.

WOODY

*Roll on, Citroen, roll on
Outta Brooklyn
Through smelly New Jersey.
Roll on, Citroen, roll on.*

CLOSE - CLINTON AND NATE

Clinton pinches a sleeping Nate's nostrils and wakes
him up.

CLOSE - WENDELL AND SCHNITZEL

Both have their heads out of the window.

CLOSE - TROY AND JOSEPH

Waking up.

89 CONTD

CLOSE - WOODY

He's still singing.

WOODY

*Troy's gonna be with cousin Viola
Nate's gonna be with cousin Sam.
Roll on, Citroen, roll on.*

CLINTON

Can't wait, finally have some
peace and quiet in the house
now.

TROY

Daddy, I have to go to the bathroom.

JOSEPH

Me too. And so does Schnitzel.

CAROLYN

I need my cup of coffee.

WOODY

Next filling station. Could
use coffee too, black. Like
my coffee black.

WENDELL

What's to eat?

CLINTON

Yeah.

Troy digs into the cooler.

TROY

We got orange juice, milk,
bread, baloney, oranges,
apples, grapes, crackers,
cheese.

WOODY

I'll have some cheese and
crackers. Whoa. Bathroom
stop.

90 EXT. REST STOP - MORNING

The Citroen pulls into the rest stop, before it barely
comes to a complete stop the doors open and the kids
run out to the bathroom.

90 CONTD

ANGLE - WOODY

Woody walks Schnitzel on a raggedy winter scarf make-shift dog leash and is singing.

WOODY

*C'mon, Schnitzel, this is real
green grass so c'mon and pee,
yeah, yeah. That's a real good
tree to pee on. Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

ANGLE - CITROEN

Carolyn and the kids return to the car and stare at Woody. The kids, embarrassed, hold their ears.

CLINTON

Come on, Daddy. Singing in
public.

CAROLYN

Woody, let's go.

91 INT. CITROEN - INTERSTATE 95 - DAY

WOODY

Roll on, Citroen, roll on.

CLINTON

How many times ya gonna sing
that same ole song already?

WOODY

You don't like my song.

CARMICHAEL CLAN

NO!

Clinton takes two grapes and shoves them halfway up his nostrils. He turns to Nate and Wendell.

WENDELL

Get outta here.

CLINTON

*If you think it's butter, but
it's snot. It's Chifon.*

With his index finger, Clinton blows a grape and snot out of his nose onto Nate, who screams.

91 CONTD

JOSEPH

Are we there yet?

CAROLYN

Not yet.

TROY

I'm bored.

CAROLYN

Read one of your books.

CLINTON

Remember that time Daddy bought
the color TV on the street and
when he brought it home, it
didn't work?

WENDELL

Didn't even have tubes inside.

CLINTON

Daddy, how come you always get
beat?

Woody laughs.

WOODY

It looked like a good deal.

92 EXT. CITROEN - INTERSTATE 95 - AFTERNOON

The Citroen station wagon whizzes by a freeway sign
"You are entering Maryland."

93 INT. CITROEN - INTERSTATE 95 - AFTERNOON

Clinton is singing "Dang Me" by Roger Miller.

CLINTON

*Dang me! Dang me!
Tie me on a noose and hang me.
Tie me from the highest treeee!
Dang, dang, dang.
That woman's got a hold on me!*

CAROLYN

Clinton, please.

Wendell starts to sing also.

93 CONTD

WENDELL

Me mudda done tole me,
A dame is a two face,
A lousy low stinkin',
A dirty connivin'...

Carolyn reaches back and clobbers Wendell.

WENDELL (contd)

How come I can't sing what I want?

CAROLYN

You can, just don't sing
derogatory lyrics about women.

Clinton looks at the passing cars.

CLINTON

Daddy, what does Fiat stand for?

WOODY

What?

CLINTON

Fix It Again, Tony.

Clinton is laughing.

CLINTON (contd)

Mommy, what does Pontiac stand for?

CAROLYN

Tell me, what does Pontiac
stand for?

CLINTON

Poor old Niggers Thought It Was
A Cadillac.

Clinton is dying. And Carolyn wallops him. Everyone
joins in the laughter at Clinton's expense.

CLINTON

Wendell, you shut up.

WENDELL

No, you make me.

CLINTON

You talk too much. Motor mouth.

CAROLYN

That's true.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

93 CONTD

WENDELL

No, it's not.

WOODY

Oh yeah. Wendell you run your mouth all the time. But here's what I'm gonna do. I'll give ya 5 dollars if you can keep your trap shut for 5 minutes. 5 minutes. That's all. Easiest money you'll ever make.

WENDELL

No talking?

WOODY

Not a word.

CAROLYN

Not a peep.

CLINTON

Not a sound.

WENDELL

That's easy.

WOODY

Ok. I got my watch. NOW!

Woody puts a crisp new 5 dollar bill on the dashboard.

CLOSE - WENDELL

Wendell sits back into his seat and relaxes. He looks out the window, trying to remain calm.

ANGLE - The family looks at him.

CLOSE - WENDELL

He's starting to fidget. He's getting antsy. He looks at his father's watch. It's not even 1 minute yet.

CLINTON

He's not gonna make it.

Wendell puts both hands over his mouth. It's a fight. It's a struggle. It's a battle he's beginning to lose.

WOODY

Five dollars. Five dollars.

93 CONTD

CAROLYN

You can do it. Three minutes
left.

CLINTON

That might as well be an eternity.

CLOSER - WENDELL

He's going through gyrations. Finally he can't hold
it any longer. He screams and everyone shakes their
head in disbelief. Wendell starts talking a mile a
minute why he couldn't do it.

94 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The freeway sign reads "Chesapeake 10 miles."

95 INT. CITROEN - NIGHT

Troy looks out of the window into the darkness of the road. The oncoming headlights of traffic illuminates her face, all her siblings are asleep.

CLOSE - WOODY

Woody smokes a cigarette.

CLOSE - WENDELL

Wendell, drooling on Clinton's shoulder.

CLOSE - NATE

Nate, with his mouth open. The wind coming in from the open window blows at his cheeks like Dizzy Gillespie.

CLOSE - JOSEPH

Joseph is curled up.

ANGLE - WOODY AND CAROLYN

Carolyn turns around and sees all her children sleeping; she doesn't realize Troy is up.

CAROLYN

Woody, we gotta make some changes. The money I bring in isn't enough to make ends meet. I need your help.

WOODY

Gem, I doing the best I can do. Do you want me to pick up an electric guitar and play Rock n' Roll? Do you? Do you?

Carolyn answers with her silence.

WOODY (contd)

I didn't think so. I should make some nice piece of change from this concert.

CAROLYN

C'mon, Woody, who's going to come besides us, Uncle Browne, Aunt Maxine and our friends.

95 CONTD

WOODY

Goddamnit, Gem, people are going to come. People want to hear some good music. I don't care how many records this Rock n' Roll shit sells, people still know. And I wish one time you could be supportive.

CAROLYN

Now looka here, damnit. Who gets out of bed at the crack of dawn Monday through Friday, cooks breakfast, goes to school, teaches, comes home, cooks dinner, grades papers, plans my lessons for the next day, keeps your unruly kids from killing each other all so you can be a pure musician? If that ain't support I don't know what the hell is. So don't start that I don't support you mess. You're very fortunate you got a wife like me, most women would have left your raggedy broke ass a long time ago.

CLOSE - WOODY

He puffs on his cigarette. The truth hurts.

CLOSE - CAROLYN

She's fighting back tears.

CLOSE - TROY

She's heard everything; her mother has just turned around and looks at her.

CAROLYN

What's the matter? You can't sleep?

Troy shakes her head.

CAROLYN (contd)

You want to come up here?

Troy nods and climbs into the front seat and sits between her parents.

95 CONTD

WOODY

Hey, Miss Coomish Mimmish.

CAROLYN

Aren't you the lucky one. Aunt Song and Uncle Clem said Viola is tickled pink you're coming to visit.

TROY

When am I coming home?

CAROLYN

In a few weeks.

TROY

Will the lights be on?

There is a long uncomfortable silence, as Troy looks back and forth between her parents.

WOODY

Oh yeah. All the lights will be on.

TROY

I don't wanna go. I wanna go home.

CAROLYN

Oh, Troy, stop worrying. You're going to have a wonderful time. Please, just this once ... I'll dance at your wedding.

TROY

Daddy, I'm sorry I'm going to miss your concert.

WOODY

You'll get the next one.

96 EXT. UNCLE CLEM AND AUNT SONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Citroen pulls up into the driveway of a split level house with a manicured lawn. The Carmichael family sleepily gets out.

WOODY

Clinton, gimme a hand with Troy's bags.

96 CONTD

CLINTON

Who, me?

WOODY

Boy, you better start to mind.

Clinton reluctantly pulls Troy's luggage off the roof rack and lets them hit the ground with a thump. The others make their way to the door. Clinton follows behind dragging Troy's luggage through the dirt and gravel.

97 EXT. DOORWAY - NIGHT

CLEM CARMICHAEL, Woody's older brother, stands at the doorway with his wife AUNT SONG, a short, stout, busty woman and their daughter VIOLA. She is Troy's age but a lot more physically developed. From out of Aunt Song's arms jumps her chihuahua QUEENIE, who runs towards Schnitzel.

SONG

Lawd have mercy. Will you take a look at this. I didn't think y'all were ever gonna get here. Come on in, y'all must be tired.

CLEM

Hey Woody. Carolyn.

SONG

Lawd have mercy, y'all done brought your dog too! Go put Queenie in the family room.

CLINTON

The family room?

The clan piles in, exchanging hugs, hello's, look how you've grown, etc. Woody and Clem hug each other brotherly.

98 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Carmichaels stand in awe in the spacious, immaculate, wall to wall plush carpeted home of their relatives.

WENDELL

Man, you all sure got a clean house.

98 CONTD

Carolyn nudges Wendell as Clem and Song laugh. Aunt Song has a loud, infectious laugh. Troy and Viola stand looking at each other.

SONG

Ain't that cute. Clem, you
heard what Clinton said?

Clem grunts.

WENDELL

I'm Wendell.

CLINTON

I'm Clinton.

SONG

Carolyn, I just love yours and
Troy's hair. Look at all them
tiny braids and things. What
y'all call that?

Schnitzel wanders into the plush carpeted living room, which has a very unlivd look about it. Joseph tries to catch him.

SONG (contd)

Oh no, honey. We don't let
the dogs in there. That
carpet's too nice.

CAROLYN

Joseph, go put Schnitzel in
the car.

JOSEPH

Why?

Carolyn grits her teeth.

CAROLYN

Because I said so.

Joseph and Nate take Schnitzel out to the car.

SONG

Viola, ain't you gonna say
hello to your cousin Troy?

She pushes Viola towards Troy. They still continue to stare at each other.

90 CONTD

CAROLYN

Say hello, Troy.

TROY

Hi.

VIOLA

Hello.

SONG

She's just a little shy. Lawd
have mercy, how long has it
been? Five years?

CAROLYN

The last reunion. You do have
a beautiful home.

SONG

Thanks.

WOODY

I could use some coffee.

CAROLYN

Woody!

SONG

Oh shoot! I don't mind.
We're family. Anybody hungry?
I got some fried chicken and
potato salad in the kitchen.

Woody and his boys stampede into the kitchen like a herd
of elephants.

99 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Woody, Clinton, Wendell, Nate and Joseph sit around
the table greasing like there's no tomorrow. As
usual Wendell is chewing and smacking loudly.

WOODY

Clinton, pass me one of them
pops.

CLINTON

It ain't a pop, it's a soda.

WOODY

Down here we call 'em pop.
Don't we, Clem?

99 CONTD

CLEM

Sho' do.

WENDELL

Aunt Song, you sure can cook.

SONG

Well, thank you, sugar. Lawd,
we sure are happy to have you
here with us, Troy. Ain't we,
Clem? Clem?

CLEM

Uh, oh yeah, honey.

SONG

Viola, why don't you show Troy
your room. Carolyn, we gonna
have some fun. Troy can
stay as long as she wants.

CAROLYN

Did you hear that? Isn't that
nice?

TROY

Uh-huh. I mean, yes, thank
you.

CAROLYN

Woody, we really should get
going. We still have to drop
Nate off at Trudy and Boo's.

WOODY

Yeah, alright. Song, maybe
you can cut me a piece of that
cake to go.

SONG

OH, ain't that nice, Nate's
gonna stay with cousin Sam and
Troy's here with us. Ain't
that somethin'?

WOODY

Come on, y'all, we still got
another two hours to go.

JOSEPH

I'm tired of driving.

99 CONTD

CLEM
When y'all headed back to New
York?

WOODY
Day after tomorrow.

100 INT. DOORWAY - NIGHT

Clem, Song, Viola and Troy stand in the doorway.
Woody eats his large piece of cake and walks toward
the car with family. Carolyn hugs her only daughter for
what seems like dear life.

CAROLYN
Try to get along with everyone.

CLINTON
C'mon, let's go.

CLOSE - TROY

TROY
I'll try, Mommy.

ANGLE - CITROEN

The family drives off. Nate, Joseph and Schnitzel hang
out of the windows waving goodbye.

CLOSE - TROY

As her family drives away we hear the distinctive Citroen
car horn and Troy stomps her foot.

TROY
Don't leave me.

CLOSE - AUNT SONG

SONG
Let's go inside, Troy. We're
gonna have a great ole time.

The following section of Troy's stay will be shot with
Anamorphic lenses. The NIGHTMARE BEGINS.

BALM IN GILEAD

101 INT. VIOLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE - RECORD PLAYER

The Barbie Doll portable record player plays an album
of songs about etiquette for young girls.

101 CONTD

VOICE

*When you're getting dressed for bed,
I have often heard it said,
Before you go to sleep
You have to put away your clothes.*

CLOSE - DOLLS

Viola's room is filled with every Barbie doll a child can buy, all the clothes, all the accessories and all white.

VOICE (contd)

*That's a good habit, yes, a
very good habit. So get into
this habit every day. Because
if you're going to do things,
do things right.*

ANGLE - ROOM

Viola's room is filled with posters The Jackson Five and stuffed dolls. Aunt Song sings along with record as she unpacks Troy's bags shaking her big wide hips. Troy and Viola sit on their twin beds in bathrobes. The Barbie Doll record player goes into the next song.

VOICE

*When you finish a meal, and
you really feel you have other
things to do, just ask if may
I be excused and they'll say
"yes" to you.*

ANGLE - BEDS

Aunt Song turns down the covers on both beds as Queenie the pet chihuahua jumps on Troy. Troy snarls at the dog.

SONG

*Queenie, is Mama's baby gonna
be nice to Troy? Troy, honey,
where are your pajamas?*

Troy rummages through her luggage and pulls out a pair of boy's worn hand-me-down pajamas.

TROY

Here.

101 CONTD

SONG

Lawd have mercy, you can't
sleep in those, give Troy one
of your nighties.

Viola goes to her dresser and removes a dainty pair
of young girl's pajamas. Troy grabs it and goes into
the all pink bathroom to change. Aunt Song pokes her
head in.

ANGLE - BATHROOM

SONG

Sugar, you ain't got nuthin'
to hide with your ole skinny
self, thinner than a blade of
grass. Viola, you got your
bra on?

ANGLE - BEDROOM

VIOLA

Yes.

Troy jumps into her bed with the new pajamas on followed
by Aunt Song.

SONG

Ok, you two rascals, let's
say our prayers.

Viola gets on her knees with her mother. Troy feeling
uneasy follows suit. Troy is on strange and new
territory, and mouths the words to the prayer she
doesn't know.

SONG AND VIOLA

Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray the Lawd my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake.
I pray the Lawd my soul to take.

Uncle Clem enters the room and helps Aunt Song tuck in
both girls.

CLEM

Alright now, I want you two
right to sleep.

SONG

Sleep tight. Don't let the bed-
bugs bite. Goodnight.

101 CONTD

Before leaving, Aunt Song turns on the Snow White night light. The two cousins are alone in bed, in the dark.

Troy jumps out of the covers and begins jumping up and down on the bed.

TROY

I keeps my pussy clean. I
keeps my pussy clean.

Viola stares at Troy and giggles.

SONG (OS)

Viola! What's that noise?

VIOLA

Nuthin', Mama. Ya better stop
before she comes in.

Troy stops jumping and hurries under the covers.

TROY

I don't care. I hate this
place anyway. And my dog
could kill your little rat dog
anyway.

VIOLA

I don't care, either. It ain't
my dog, it's Mama's dog.

Silence.

VIOLA (contd)

You like livin' in Brooklyn.

TROY

Better than here. You should
visit me.

VIOLA

Good. I like Aunt Carolyn.

Troy is silent.

VIOLA (contd)

It's OK if you don't like Aunt
Song. She's not my real mother.
I was adopted.

101 CONTD

TROY

Oh!

Silence.

TROY (contd)

What's that noise?

VIOLA

Ya ain't never heard crickets
before?

102 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Troy is seated in a chair. Aunt Song and Viola stand over her taking out the tiny, plaited cornrows. One side of Troy's head is unbraided and bushy; Song tries to get a comb through it.

SONG

Lawd have mercy, you sho' do
have one thick head of hair.

TROY

Oww!

SONG

Oh Lawd, don't tell me now
that you have the nerve to
be tenderheaded.

103 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Viola and Troy are playing Badminton. Troy's hair is combed out in two Mickey Mouse bushy puffs, with a crooked part down the middle; like Viola, she is wearing a dainty junior miss outfit. Troy hits the "birdie" like a baseball and sends it flying over Viola's head.

103A EXT. FRONT LAWN - DAY

Troy tries to teach Viola how to jump double dutch. One end of the rope is tied to a tree. Troy stands behind Viola holding her arms, showing her how to turn the rope. She then jumps in.

104 INT. FAMILY ROOM - AFTERNOON

Viola and Troy drag Queenie around the room on her dog pillow. As Queenie growls, Viola throws the pillow into the air with her on it.

104 CONTD

ANGLE - BIG COLOR TV

A young white evangelist couple lead an audience of white children in song.

JIM AND TAMMY

*One, two, three, the devil's
after me. Four, five, six, he's
always throwing sticks.
Seven, eight, nine, he misses
every time.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah. Amen.*

ANGLE - VIOLA AND TROY

Sitting on the couch, Viola is singing along. Troy sits wide-eyed taking it all in. Aunt Song enters the room.

SONG

Praise the Lawd. Did y'all
wash your hands when you came
in from playing outside?

Viola ignores her.

SONG (contd)

Girl, I'm speaking to you.

VIOLA

I don't have to listen to you.

Troy is amazed by this.

SONG

Alright, Missy, don't go
showin' off in front of your
company. I'm gonna speak to
your father about this.

Aunt Song leaves.

VIOLA

She ain't my mother.

Troy gazes at Viola, who stares at the TV.

105 INT. VIOLA'S ROOM - DAY

Troy lays on the bed playing with naked Ken and Barbie dolls. She has Ken mounting Barbie, grinding away, "oohing" and "aahing."

105 CONTD

Viola rummages through her closet and pulls out a large crumpled brown bag which she dumps on the bed. Troy watches as a variety of candy covers the bed.

TROY

Wow! Where'd you get this from?

VIOLA

My daddy sneaks it to me. He makes me promise not to tell Mama.

Troy and Viola gorge themselves.

106 INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

ANGLE - WINDOW

Rain cascades down the window. Lightning flashes. We hear thunder. OFFSCREEN we hear Troy teaching Viola a hand clapping game.

TROY & VIOLA (OS)

*Miss Lucy had a steamboat, the
steamboat had a bed, ding, ding.*

ANGLE - TELEVISION

A white evangelist preaches.

EVANGELIST

The Devil comes in many disguises,
different shapes and sizes.

ANGLE - GIRLS

TROY & VIOLA

*Miss Lucy went to heaven and the
steamboat went to hell-o operator*

ANGLE - AUNT SONG

She stands, head bowed, with one hand over her breast. With her other arm she holds Queenie and whispers a prayer.

EVANGELIST

But if you have Jesus in your heart, then you will repent. You will say no to the devil and no to sin.

106 CONTD

CLOSE - GIRLS

Troy and Viola are standing facing each other, clapping and singing.

TROY & VIOLA

*Please give me number nine
and if the line is busy you will
show me your behind
a 'frigerator there lived a
piece of glass, Miss Lucy sat
upon it and she broke her little
ass-k me no more questions ...*

ANGLE - AUNT SONG

Aunt Song can't believe what filth Troy is teaching her daughter.

SONG

Blasphemy! Blasphemy! That's a
devilish song, Troy. Sinful.
Lawd, save this heathen child.

Outside the crackle of thunder.

SONG (contd)

Viola, cut the lights befo'
we all get struck by lightning.

Behind Song, WE NOW SEE Viola and Troy, also standing with heads bowed. Viola quickly turns out the lights before the lightning bolts come from the heavens and strike them all dead. All three stand in darkness only illuminated by the TV.

CLOSE - AUNT SONG

SONG

Praise the Lawd. Thank you,
Jesus. Lawd, protect us from
this devilish storm.

CLOSE - TROY

Troy looks at the bowed heads before her. This is truly the nut house.

107 INT. VIOLA'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Troy gets out of bed, while Viola still sleeps.

108 INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Troy looks at herself in the mirror, examining her chest, there is no growth yet, no developing breasts. Troy leaves dejected.

109 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Troy opens the bathroom door to see Aunt Song standing there on guard holding Queenie, who snarls at her.

SONG

Did you wash your hands?

TROY

Uh, no. I mean yes.

SONG

Don't tell me a fib. You know it's sinful to lie.

TROY

Yes, Aunt Song. I washed them.

SONG

Good, run back to bed. Uncle Clem and I have a surprise for you.

110 INT. VIOLA'S ROOM - MORNING

Troy sits in bed, Viola in the other as Aunt Song holding Queenie along with Uncle Clem cheerfully come into the room holding gifts.

SONG, CLEM AND VIOLA

Happy Birthday to you!

TROY

Thank you.

SONG

Well now, ain't this something. I'm gonna make you a great big birthday cake. What kinda cake shall it be?

TROY

Chocolate.

110 CONTD

SONG

Oh, I can't make chocolate
because the last time I did
Viola broke out in hives.

VIOLA

No, I didn't. You did.

SONG

Viola, please don't argue
with your mother. See how
she does, Clem. I say it's
white, she say it's black.

CLEM

If the girl says she didn't
get no hives, then she didn't
get no hives.

SONG

There you go again, always taking
her side.

CLEM

For Chrissakes, let's have
Troy open her gifts, honey,
please.

Troy opens the biggest box, it's a neatly wrapped package,
and removes a frilly white dress. She holds it up
feigning excitement; this is definitely not what she
wanted or expected.

TROY

Oh, it's a dress. Thank you.

SONG

That's from me and your Uncle
Clem. Ain't it pretty? You
can put it on today.

TROY

Uh-huh.

Troy quickly places it back in the box. Yolanda heands
her her gift. Troy unwraps it, a small bra.

VIOLA

It's a training bra.

Troy smiles, embarrassed.

110 CONTD

SONG

Well, you ain't gonna need that for
a while.

Clem and Viola give Aunt Song another dirty look. She
tries to cover up her faux pas and hands Troy an envelope.

SONG (contd)

This here came in the mail
this morning for you.

Troy takes it.

TROY

It's from my mother.

SONG

Oh yeah? What she say? I
hope she doesn't mind 'bout
me taking them braids out, cuz
I didn't know what else to do.

CLEM

Let's let her read her letter
in peace. C'mon, everybody.
Viola, let's go.

They leave the room. Troy takes out the letter from
the envelope and two small tissue-paper wrapped objects
upon opening which contain two pairs of jade elephant
shaped earrings.

CLOSE - TROY

She reads the letter.

CAROLYN (VO)

Dear Ladybug. Happy Birthday.
The mailman just tapped on the
window and I got your letter.
Hooray.

111 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY

REGULAR FLAT LENSES

Carolyn reads her daughter's letter in the barber chair,
while she combs Joseph's nappy head.

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111 CONTD

CAROLYN (VO contd)
I'm glad that you are having
such a wonderful time. Could
this be true? Minnie wanted
to know...

CLOSE - MINNIE

MINNIE
... When will Troy be back
from down south?

112 EXT. CARMICHAEL STOOP - NIGHT

Clinton, Wendell, Quentin, Richard and Ronald play
Strat-o-matic baseball. Tommy Za sits a few steps
down singing along with the 45's on the record player.

CAROLYN (VO)
Yep, all the boys are still on
the stoop playing Strat-o-matic
baseball, whew, what a waste of
time. And Tommy still can't sing.

113 INT. VIOLA'S ROOM - DAY - ANAMORPHIC LENSES

Troy is laid out on the bed reading the letter.

CAROLYN (VO)
Last night we had yet another
hassle with Tony Meyers. Vic
Powell didn't slap him this time,
thank God. Your father was there.

114 EXT. TONY MEYERS' AREAWAY - MORNING - REGULAR FLAT LENSES

CAROLYN (VO)
Wendell had been telling me
that every morning Tony throws
trash from his yard and sidewalk
onto our stoop...

Tony Meyers stands in his areaway, looks around, the
coast is clear, then hurls refuse onto the Carmichaels'
stoop.

115 EXT. CARMICHAEL STOOP - DAY

CAROLYN (VO)
Finally, we caught him, red-
handed.

115 CONTD

The kids are on the stoop, yelling at him. *

WENDELL

Hey, man. What the hell do
you think you're doing?

TONY MEYERS

I'm just throwing back your
own trash. Who told you to
throw it over here in the
first place?

CLINTON

How do you know it was us?

TOMMY ZA

You did it to your own stink
house, you maricon. *

RICHARD

Oh snap.

They all laugh.

TONY MEYERS

Don't think I don't know Spanish.
You're all trying to kill me,
just like you killed my mother.

WENDELL

Ya old ass dried up mother
dropped dead from the stinkin'
smell.

TOMMY ZA

Yeah! You killed her.

Woody and Carolyn run out of the house, and a crowd starts
to gather. *

CAROLYN (VO)

You know how it is on our
block; a little shouting starts
and you got a big show and a
big crowd. *

WOODY

Clinton! Wendell! What happened? *

CLINTON

We caught him throwing trash
over here. *

15 CONTD

WOODY

I expect more from a grown man.

TONY MEYERS

Your kids always throw garbage
at my house.

CAROLYN (VO)

True.

TONY MEYERS

And furthermore, they go on
your roof and throw rocks at
my dogs in the backyard.

CAROLYN (VO)

Untrue.

QUICK CUT of Clinton, Wendell, Tommy Za, Richard, and Ronald
on the roof throwing rocks at his dogs in backyard.

The teenagers groan, while the crowd laughs.

CAROLYN

Clinton, Wendell, are you doing
this?

CLINTON

C'mon, Mommy, you gonna
believe this lunatic?

She's sold.

CAROLYN

My kids are doing no such thing.
Now start acting like an adult
and stop this foolishness.

WOODY

Tony, your house really does
stink to the high heavens.

The crowd agrees and heckles him some more. A Puerto Rican
boarder LOUIE from Florence's house shouts at Tony in Spanish.

FLORENCE

Hey! You! Number Four. Mira!
Where's my rent?

LOUIE

Lissen, Mira, Tony. Why you
house stink? You house stink.

115 CONTD

The crowd is dying.

CLOSE - FLORENCE AND MRS. COLOMBO

FLORENCE

I ain't helping that bastard
out this time. Tony's still
got my pan.

SCRIPT FLY

115 CONTD

MRS. COLOMBO

Once a crazy sonofabitch always
a crazy sonofabitch.

FLORENCE

Ma, you can say that again.

MRS. COLOMBO

Once a crazy sonofabitch ...

CAROLYN (VO)

Everyone was cracking up.
Tony was overwhelmed, he had
to go back into his foul
smelling house. Aren't you
glad to be away from all these
crazy people in Crooklyn, New
York?

WE SEE Woody getting his family into the house.

CAROLYN (VO contd)

And now about your father.
It started with Clinton.

116 INT. CLINTON'S ROOM - MORNING

CAROLYN

Clinton, you're the eldest and
I expect more from you. I'm
going to let you make your own
decision.

CLINTON

Why did Daddy have to have his
concert tonight? The same
exact night of the 7th game
of the NBA Championship. The
Knicks and the Lakers and I
got tickets.

CAROLYN

You'll make the right decision.
Which is more important?

117 INT. CAMI HALL - NIGHT

ANGLE - STAGE

Woody Carmichael is on stage, performing on the piano.
The music is beautiful, and we can feel this in his
performance; WE SEE in his face, he's enjoying this.
He's most happy when he's playing his music.

117 CONTD

ANGLE - AUDIENCE

The small hall is virtually empty. Besides the Carmichael clan, Uncle Browne, Aunt Maxine, and some close friends no one has come. We do not see Clinton at all.

CAROLYN (VO)

Clinton, which is more important?
Your father or the Knicks.

118 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The concert is over and everybody is eating cake and ice cream. The mood is gloomy, but people still try to remain upbeat. There is no getting around the fact despite the fine music, nobody came.

JOSEPH

I enjoyed the concert, Daddy.

WENDELL

Me too.

WOODY

Thank you.

UNCLE BROWNE

That was some new stuff.

WOODY

Been writing like mad.

CAROLYN

You should record it.

She kisses her husband on the forehead.

AUNT MAXINE

That's a good idea.

WOODY

Maybe I will. I've also started
on a folk opera.

AUNT MAXINE

About what?

WOODY

Growing up in Alabama.

118 CONTD

 UNCLE BROWNE

 You got the material, that's
 for sure.

 CAROLYN (VO)

 We were all trying hard to lift
 your father's spirits and it was
 working until ...

We hear the front door open and Clinton walks into the
conversation.

ANGLE - CLINTON

He looks at them, all eyes are upon him.

ANGLE

Everyone becomes quiet.

CLOSE - CLINTON

He knows he's in a jam.

 CLINTON

 The Knicks are World Champs.

Clinton runs upstairs.

CLOSE - WOODY

He smiles, but no smile in the world could mask the deep
hurt that has been inflicted by his eldest son, his first
born.

 WOODY

 The Knicks won. How about
 that.

119 INT. ~~YOlanda~~ YOlanda'S ROOM - MORNING - ANAMORPHIC LENSES

CLOSE - TROY

She finishes the letter.

 CAROLYN (VO)

 I've enclosed some gifts for
 you and Viola. We all miss
 you dreadfully. Love, Mommy.
 P.S. We got the lights turned
 back on, thanks to Uncle Browne
 who is also buying your plane
 ticket home. Please write and
 thank him immediately.

120 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Aunt Song stands at the back door calling for her dog Queenie. Along the counter are the ingredients for a cake. Uncle Clem and Viola sit at the table eating breakfast.

SONG

Queenie! Queenie! I don't
know where she's run off to.

Troy walks into the kitchen, wearing the earrings from her mother.

CLEM

Well, here she is, the birthday
girl.

SONG

Did your mother send you those?

TROY

Yes, they're jade.

Aunt Song examines them.

AUNT SONG

Well, ain't they pretty. What
is that, li'l elephants?

Troy hands Viola the small tissue-wrapped package and she tears it open. Viola holds up an identical pair.

VIOLA

Look, Mama, Aunt Carolyn sent
me these.

CLEM

Aren't they pretty.

SONG

Oh now, Viola, you ain't
got pierced ears. You know
how I feel 'bout that.

VIOLA

Troy has pierced ears.

SONG

Troy was also wearing them
funny braids with beads and
things --

Troy looks down at her feet. She's been hurt.

120 CONTD

VIOLA

You don't ever let me do what
I want to do.

Troy shouts.

TROY

I wanna go home.

Everyone stops dead in their tracks.

SONG

Beg pardon?

Troy shouts once more.

TROY

I wanna go home now!

CLEM

Now, Troy, there's no need to
get upset. Everybody has a
little fight now and then.
Your Aunt Song didn't mean
nuthin' 'bout your hair or
earrings. Did you, honey?

TROY

I don't care.

VIOLA

See what you did.

SONG

Lawd have mercy, Troy. You
just got down here. Aunt Song
has a big mouth sometimes ...
How's it gonna look if you
leave now? You want your folks
to think we done chased you
back up north?

VIOLA

Well, I wanna go too.

SONG

Please, baby. Your Aunt Song
loves you and your family.

Troy is not budging. She is not to be moved.

120 CONTD

SONG (contd)

Clem, do something.

CLEM

Look, y'all, if Troy wants to go home, Troy's goin' home.

SONG

Troy, at least stay for the birthday party I planned.

CLOSE - TROY

TROY

Well, alright.

121 EXT. AUNT SONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aunt Song is on her knees pushing her way through the bushes with a flashlight in hand, searching for her Queenie.

SONG

Queenie! Queenie! Come to
Mama! Merciful Heaven. Where
are you?

122 INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Troy and Viola are joined by two other girls their age, twins JUDY and JODY. All are dressed in pajamas and are having a pillow fight. They're jumping up and down off the couch. Aunt Song walks in, hands and face smeared with dirt, she falls into lazy boy chair beaten and dejected.

VIOLA

Did you find her, Mama?

SONG

I just don't understand where
my baby is. It's not like
Queenie to up and disappear.
Why, Lawd?

Aunt Song starts to cry. Viola and Troy try to comfort her. Judy and Jody try not to giggle.

TROY

She'll be back, Aunt Song.

122 CONTD

VIOLA

Don't worry, Mama, Queenie
will show up, probably in the
morning, went for a walk.

TROY

And thank you very much for
my birthday.

Aunt Song wipes away her tears and tries to muster up
some excitement.

SONG

Well, it's getting late, y'all.
Everybody had enough cake and
ice cream?

ALL

Yes!

SONG

Everybody brush they teeth and
wash they hands?

TROY AND VIOLA

Yes!

Judy and Jody look at each other "wash our hands."

SONG

Come on and help me pull out
this bed then.

Everyone begins to throw the pillows off the Castro
convertible couch. With the strength of an ox Aunt
Song pulls out the bed. Like a piece of toast popping
out of a toaster springs Queenie, a flattened, stiff
corpse (Queenie meet Rigor Mortis, Rigor Mortis meet
Queenie). Aunt Song's body bounces on the bed as if
it were a trampoline. The girls shriek and move back,
as she rocks back and forth, holding in her large bosom
her dead stiff beloved dog, Queenie.

SONG (contd)

Lawddd! Dear God in Heaven.
Take me right now. I don't
want to live anymore without
my baby Queenie.

123 **EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

A bereaved Aunt Song kneels beside Queenie's freshly dug tiny grave; she is openly crying. Uncle Clem stands behind his wife as Viola and Troy look on in amazement.

CLEM

Come on, Troy, you gotta plane
to catch. I'll go get your bags.

Troy kneels down next to her aunt.

TROY

Thank you for everything ...
I'm sorry about Queenie.

This only makes Aunt Song cry again. Troy looks up at Viola, who shrugs, she kneels next to her.

TROY (contd)

Bye, Viola. Maybe you can
come stay with me sometime.

VIOLA

I would like that.

Uncle Clem has returned with Troy's bags.

CLEM

All aboard.

She whispers to the grave.

TROY

Bye, Queenie. I'm sorry you
got squashed to death in the
sofa, even though I hated your
guts.

Viola giggles. Troy kisses her cousin and leaves.

HOME TO CROOKLYN

124 **EXT. STREET - DAY**

Uncle Clem and Troy drive off down the street as Viola waves her goodbyes.

125 **INT. LA GUARDIA AIRPORT - DAY - BACK TO REGULAR LENSES
FOR THE REST OF THE FILM**

Troy walks through the terminal with much anticipation and sees her Uncle Browne and Aunt Maxine waving at the gate.

125 CONTD

ANGLE

They meet and it's an awkward embrace.

MAXINE

Hi, little Ladybug, welcome home.

BROWNE

Hey, Miss Coomish Mimmish. How was your flight?

Troy is looking for her parents.

TROY

Fine! Where's my father?

MAXINE

OH, he had to go to a rehearsal so your mother asked us to pick you up.

Troy is still puzzled.

TROY

She didn't want to ride with you?

BROWNE

Oh, uh, she ... she was busy.

MAXINE

Troy! What happened to your hair?

TROY

Aunt Song didn't like my braids and she took 'em out.

MAXINE

Goodness gracious, Carolyn Carmichael is gonna have a fit when she sees this.

126 INT. CAR - BROOKLYN - QUEENS EXPRESSWAY - DAY

Uncle Browne drives while Aunt Maxine rides shotgun. Troy sits in the back but leans forward between them.

MAXINE

So you were ready to come home, huh? Had enough of the south? I don't blame you one bit.

TROY

Uh-huh. Too slow.

126 CONTD

Browne and Maxine chuckle, somewhat amused.

BROWNE

Shoot, y'all don't know what
you're missing growing up in
the south.

MAXINE

I'm glad I missed it. Heard
you had a birthday too.

TROY

Uh-huh. Yesterday.

MAXINE

Happy Birthday. What are you,
eight?

TROY

Ten!

BROWNE

So how's my brother Clem?
Aunt Song and Viola?

TROY

Fine. Oh, thank you for buying
my ticket. I didn't have a chance
to write.

MAXINE

You're very welcome.

BROWNE

Hey, that's what families are
for, gotta stick together.

127 INT. CAR - BROOKLYN STREETS - DAY

In the back seat Troy looks out the window.

ANGLE - BROOKLYN STREETS - DAY

To Troy Brooklyn seems different, although the scenery
hasn't changed. The car slows down and pulls up to a
hospital entrance.

128 INT. CAR - DAY

Troy looks around, Uncle Browne and Aunt Maxine face
forward.

== Script Fly.com ==
128 CONTD

TROY
Why are we stopping?

BROWN
Troy...

Troy panics.

TROY
What happened?

MAXINE
Baby, its's nothing serious,
your mother.

TROY
My mother's sick?!!!

129 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

BROWNE
She hasn't been feeling well.

TROY
What's wrong with her?

MAXINE
We don't know. The doctors
are running tests.

TROY
How come she didn't tell me?
How come nobody told me?

MAXINE
No one wanted you to worry
yourself silly. Carolyn didn't
think there was any cause for
alarm.

TROY
Where's my father?

BROWNE
With your mother.

130 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Carolyn Carmichael is laying up in the hospital bed
tossing and turning, trying to get comfortable. She
is mildly sedated, yet fully conscious. Troy stands
at the doorway.

130 CONTD

WOODY

Hey! Miss Coomish Mimmish.

Carolyn painfully raises her head and forces a smile.

CAROLYN

Welcome home, Ladybug.

Troy moves to the bed and touches her mother.

TROY

Hi, Mommie. How are you feeling?

Carolyn stares at her daughter's hair.

CAROLYN

Did Aunt Song do that?

She nods.

CAROLYN (contd)

Well, I'll be goddamned. I
knew she would.

Carolyn starts to laugh, but it becomes a dry, heaving
choking cough. Troy quickly hands her mother a glass of
water which she sips from a straw. The Mother smiles at
her daughter, her only girl and pats the bed. Troy lays
down beside her mother. The Mother mustering up all the
strength she can in her failing body hugs her daughter.

CAROLYN

Give me a big hug. I've missed
you Ladybug.

TROY

I've missed you too Mommie,
even my brothers.

CAROLYN

You must have really been lonely
to miss them.

TROY

Mommy, I've been thinking. You
work too hard. I can start helping
you out. From now on I'm going to
clean the house and cook also.
I don't even care if nobody else
helps me. You have to get your
rest so you can get better.

== Script Fly.com ==
130 CONTD

CAROLYN

That's very thoughtful of you.

TROY

Mommy, can I decorate my room?
Viola's room was so nice and pretty.

CAROLYN

Of course you can. Ladybug, you're gonna have to watch out for your little brother Joseph. He's the youngest, he's your responsibility, the rest of those ashy, rusty butt Negro brothers of yours can take care of themselves. You got to promise me.

TROY

I promise Mommy.

Troy stares at her Mother.

ANGLE - DOOR

Woody stands at the door, smiling.

CAROLYN

Woody, go get the car, I'm ready to go home now.

WOODY

Alright, come on.

Troy perks up.

TROY

Are you coming home now, really?

Carolyn makes a feeble attempt to lift herself up, but it's in vain. She doesn't have the strength, and she falls back into the bed.

CAROLYN

Go get the car.

WOODY

Let's go, Troy.

131 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Troy walks with her father towards the Citroen. He puts her luggage into the car and they get in.

132 INT. CAR - DAY

Troy sits in the front seat beside her father. He turns the ignition and pulls off.

TROY

Daddy, I thought we were gonna go back and pick up Mommie.

WOODY

After I drop you off first.

TROY

Is Nate home yet?

WOODY

Yep, got home yesterday.

TROY

I miss him ... everybody.

WOODY

Hey! I bet you had a good ole time down south with cousin Viola, big house, clean air, grass, plenty to eat, lights on, no mean brothers gettin' in your way.

TROY

Aunt Song's dog Queenie got squished in the couch and I like it here better anyway.

WOODY

Say what? Squished? Dead?

Troy nods and Woody laughs.

WOODY (contd)

Glad you're home.

TROY

Is Mommie really sick? Cuz she looks fine.

132 CONTD

WOODY

Don't know. One day she said
wasn't feeling good and went
to the doctor. She just needs
rest, nuthin' serious.

133 EXT. CARMICHAEL STOOP - DAY

The Citroen pulls up in front of the house. Troy gets
out of the car and notices all of the newly planted
trees lined up and down the block.

TROY

Where did the trees come from?

He's taking her bags out of the car.

WOODY

Your mother. She got the block
association to put some life
on this street.

ANGLE - STOOP

Clinton, Wendell, Richard, Ronald and Quentin are all
engaged in their endless games of Strat-o-matic and
Tommy Za plays his 45's.

WOODY

Clinton, Wendell! Looka here!
Tommy, turn that junk off.

Tommy lowers his music, and Clinton points at his sister's
hair.

CLINTON

I thought you weren't comin'
home for at least another few
weeks.

WENDELL

Troy the boy.

WOODY

You two, come and get these bags.

CLINTON

Can't you see we're busy.

Quentin and Tommy get up and bring Troy's bags into the
house. Nate, Joseph and Schnitzel run out of the house.

TROY

Schnitzel!

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133 CONTD

He jumps into Troy's arms.

NATE

Hi, Troy!

JOSEPH

Mommy's in the hospital.

TROY

I know.

JOSEPH

We got the lights back on.

Tommy and Quentin come out of the house and sit back on the stoop.

TROY

Shh, I know.

NATE

What happened to your hair?

TROY

Man! You too?

WOODY

Alright, y'all. I'll be back
in awhile.

TROY

You going to get Mommy?

WILLIE

Yeah. I'm going to get Mommy.

133A INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - MORNING

In a SERIES OF JUMP CUTS, WE SEE Troy cleaning up the kitchen:

Sweeping the floor.

Mopping the floor.

Washing dishes.

Boiling water.

134 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY

Troy looks around the empty house. She stands by the light
switch, turning it on and off.

135 INT. TROY'S ROOM - DAY

Troy runs into her, room turns the light switch on, then
the television.

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136 EXT. STREET - DAY

Troy and Minnie stand behind the johnny pump, wetting
their hands in the sprinkler.

136 CONTD

MINNIE

You shoulda been there, we went
all the way to Coney Island.

TROY

I've been to Coney Island.

MINNIE

Yeah, but we got to go on the
cyclone, the bumpa cars, Nathan's,
we sent swimming ...

TROY

That water's filthy.

MINNIE

Uh-uh, no, it ain't, only for
the jellyfish. We gonna go again,
next summer but at night time.

Minnie looks at Troy.

MINNIE (contd)

Where you was again?

TROY

In Virginia, with my cousin.

MINNIE

That's far?

TROY

Kind of. Down south.

MINNIE

I heard this lady from around
the corner say that your mother
in the hospital.

TROY

Yeah, but she's coming out today.

MINNIE

Remember when my sister got hit
by that car?

TROY

Yeah, broke her leg.

MINNIE

I don't like no hospitals.
They smell funny.

137 INT. TROY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The television is blasting. Clinton, Wendell, Nate and Joseph are glued to the set with Schnitzel also.

TROY
Change the channel and turn
it down.

CLINTON
Don't think you can come back
home givin' orders.

WENDELL
Yeah, Crabby, Mommie ain't
home, what do you care?

NATE
Be quiet.

CLINTON
You be quiet. The both of
youse can go back.

ANGLE - DOOR

Woody Carmichael enters the room; his eyes are swollen
and red.

WOODY
Clinton, turn the TV off.

CLINTON
Aw c'mon.

WOODY
TURN IT OFF!

Clinton quickly does as he is told.

WOODY (contd)
Everybody listen good.

TROY
It's Mommy.

WOODY
The doctors say your mother
is sicker than we thought.

CLINTON
What are you talkin' 'bout?

137 CONTD

WOODY
They found cancer.

JOSEPH
What's cancer?

TROY
Mommy's gonna die.

Woody Carmichael slumps into a chair and starts to weep.
All his children are in shock.

DELIVERANCE

138 EXT. PARK - DAY

In silence Nate and Joseph walk through the park. Behind them is Troy, she picks up a stick and lets it drag behind her. She sings quietly to herself.

TROY
*One, two, three, the Devil's after me;
Four, five, six, he's always
throwing sticks;
Seven, eight, nine, he misses
every time;
Hallelujah, Hallelujah. Amen.*

139 INT. TROY'S ROOM - MORNING

Troy sits directly in front of the television and sings along with the commercial jingles.

ANGLE - DOOR

Aunt Maxine enters the room, feigning excitement, in her hands she holds a green polyester jacket, white shirt, black skirt and a new pair of shoes. She sits on the bed next to Troy.

MAXINE
Here are your new clothes.

Troy is unmoved.

MAXINE (contd)
Well, don't you like it? I
picked 'em out myself.

Troy turns from the television to the clothes, then back to the TV.

139 CONTD

MAXINE (contd)
Why don't you at least try
it on.

Troy is silent and this is starting to get to her aunt.

MAXINE (contd)
Please, Ladybug, don't be
difficult.

Troy winces at the sound of "Ladybug."

MAXINE (contd)
Troy, I know this is hard for
you, baby, it's hard for everybody
but you have to wear something
nice.

Troy turns and finally faces her.

TROY
My mother hates polyester.
She would never make me wear
anything like that.

Defeated Aunt Maxine gets up and leaves.

140 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Woody Carmichael, dressed in his version of funeral
attire, stands in the hallway blowing the cow horn.

WOODY
Troy!

TROY
What?

WOODY
Let's go!

OFF SCREEN we hear a car horn.

TROY
I'm not going.

WOODY
Aw shoot.

He runs up the stairs.

141 INT. TROY'S ROOM - MORNING

Troy lays out in bed still watching cartoons, still in her pajamas.

WOODY

Troy, baby, what are you doing?

TROY

I'm sick.

WOODY

Troy, you got everyone waiting.

TROY

So!

WOODY

Miss Coomish Mimmish, please don't make this anymore difficult than it has to be.

TROY

I hate funerals and I'm not going.

Woody goes over to the bed and sits down.

WOODY

Troy, you're not the only one in pain. We're all hurting. Get up from this bed, put your clothes on and be downstairs in five minutes.

He leaves the room.

142 EXT. STOOP - DAY

Above the Carmichael stoop, over the front door, hangs a billowing velvet burgundy drapery.

ANGLE - TROY

Troy walks through the front door, wearing the green polyester outfit and descends the steps.

ANGLE - LIMOUSINE

The rear door opens.

CLINTON

Troy, c'mon already. We ain't got all day.

142 CONTD

Troy ducks in, the door slams behind her and the limo drives off.

143 EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

The family and mourners exit the church. One woman is being held up by several men. People are lined up to express sincere condolences to Mr. Carmichael. He stands talking to a couple who embrace him.

One WOMAN MOURNER walks over to the parked limo.

ANGLE - LIMO

Clinton, Wendell, Nate, Troy and Joseph all sit in the back awaiting their father.

ANGLE - WINDOW

The woman taps on the window and Nate lowers it. She bends down and looks in at the Carmichael kids, sighs and shakes her head. She is also in a state of shock.

WOMAN MOURNER

Where's Carolyn? I can't find her. Where is my dear friend Carolyn Carmichael?

The kids stare at the woman as if she's crazy.

CLOSE - WOMAN MOURNER

She's waiting an answer.

ANGLE - KIDS

CLINTON

Hey, roll up the window.

Nate does as he's told. The window goes up on the woman's face and all the kids laugh.

144 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY

The house is filled wall to wall with people; family, relatives, friends, neighbors and also strangers. The ambiance is lively and celebratory, people are in a festive mood.

144 CONTD

Folks are laughing, eating and being very merry as is customary at a Black wake; it's a big party for the dearly departed.

A group of people are gathered around the piano while Woody and his son Nate play together.

Joseph and a group of children chase Schnitzel around the table then out into the hallway.

Troy sits at the window looking bored. Clinton sits down next to her. He doesn't say a word. She looks at him and he looks at her. On the sneak tip he takes one of her hands and holds it. They sit together, holding hands, saying nothing, looking straight ahead.

145 EXT. STOOP - DAY

Wendell and Tommy Za sit on the stoop, he's playing a 45 slow jam as he sips beer from a crumpled brown paper bag. Tommy passes it to Wendell, who kills it.

TOMMY

Hey, man. That ain't no sip.

He snatches it back from him.

TOMMY (contd)

Ya moms was a nice lady, man.
It shoulda been that maricon
who died instead.

ANGLE - TONY MEYERS' WINDOW

Tony Meyers peers out, wide eyed.

ANGLE - TOMMY AND WENDELL

Tommy finishes his bottle and sends it crashing into Ton Meyers' areaway.

TOMMY (contd)

Go 'head say something.

146 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY

As the mourners become more and more intoxicated the volume is increasing.

ANGLE - TROY AND CLINTON

They are still holding hands. A drunk woman stumbles into Clinton's lap.

146 CONTD

CLINTON

Hey! Come on, huh, lady!

The woman recovers, apologizes and moves along. Troy is smiling.

CLINTON (contd)

Who are all these people anyway?
Comin' out of the woodworks.

TROY

Mommy had a lot of friends.

CLINTON

I guess she did.

Joseph comes up to them crying.

TROY

What's the matter?

JOSEPH

They keep laughing and pointing at me, saying, "His mama dead, his mama dead," and they took my money.

TROY

Who?

JOSEPH

The Possums.

Troy jumps up and pulls Joseph with him, leaving Clinton.

147 EXT. STREET - DAY

Defiant, Troy runs down the street with a baseball bat in her hands as Joseph follows. He points to the guilty.

JOSEPH

There they are. The Possums.

TROY

Who said it? Who said it?

Troy approaches the Possums and starts swinging and they're running and screaming for their lives.

TROY (contd)

Who took your money?

147 CONTD

 JOSEPH
 Over there, Snuffy and Right
 Hand Man.

Down the block on a stoop Snuffy and Right Hand Man
are getting high on airplane glue, inhaling and exhaling
from a brown paper bag. GLUE SNIFFERS.

ANGLE - STOOP

Troy approaches the stoop with bat in hand. Right Hand
Man seeing her leaves his friend running. Before Snuffy
can lower the bag from his mouth she winds up and clunks
him a good one on the head, which sends a squirt of blood
flying. Snuffy is too high to have felt it. He looks at
Troy and Joseph, puts his hand on his head, which comes
back bloody.

 SNUFFY
 Now why you gonna do a thing
 like that?

 TROY
 We're tired of being terrorized
 by you and One Arm. Go sniff
 on your own block.

 JOSEPH
 Yeah, that's right.

148 INT. TROY'S ROOM - DAWN

Troy tosses and turns in her sleep. OFF SCREEN we hear
loud banging noises, a CRASH here and there and Schnitzel
barking. Troy bolts up from sleep and looks around in
the darkness. She turns on the lights and starts praying.

 TROY
 Oh God, please make them stop.
 Please no more fighting.

Again a LOUD CRASH and she races out the room.

149 INT. HALLWAY - DAWN

Troy runs down the stairs, panicking as the NOISES get
louder.

 TROY
 Mommy! Daddy! Please stop.

WE FOLLOW Troy running down the stairs and into the
kitchen/dining room.

150 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAWN

Troy bursts into the room where she suddenly stops and sees Schnitzel and her father with a large cast iron skillet in hand chasing a big rat.

WOODY

Get it, Schnitzel. You sonofabitch.

TROY

Mommy! Daddy!

Woody stops dead in his tracks and looks at his daughter.

WOODY

Ladybug, Mommy's gone. She's gone.

Troy looks at her father in shock.

WOODY (contd)

Troy, you can cry. It's alright to cry. Mommy is gone.

Troy's body starts to tremble. She runs into the bathroom.

151 INT. BATHROOM - DAWN

Troy violently heaves into the toilet, her body convulsing. She falls to the floor and weeps uncontrollably as Woody holds her.

WOODY

Damn, Troy, everybody was wondering when you was gonna break. Even Clinton cried.

TROY

Daddy, please don't make me move away. I know Aunt Maxine wants me to live with her.

WOODY

Nobody's going anywhere.

Silence.

TROY

Was Mommy in a lot of pain?

WOODY

Yes, she was.

151 CONTD

TROY

Then it's good she died, so she
didn't have to suffer.

WOODY

That's nice, real nice.

152 EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Kids up and down the block. The newly planted trees have
grown noticeably, particularly the tree which stands in
front of the Carmichaels' house.

ANGLE - STOOP

Clinton, Wendell and Richard sit at the top of the stairs
engaged in their never ending game of Strat-o-matic
baseball. Tommy Za is at the bottom of the stoop with
his 45's, singing off key as usual.

153 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Troy sits in her mother's barber chair with Joseph between
her legs and combs his nappy hair with a pick. Her own hair
is now in a big bushy Afro.

JOSEPH

Ow! You're hurting me!

TROY

Oh, be quiet, it doesn't
hurt. If you'd comb it
more often it wouldn't be
looking like a sheep's behind.

JOSEPH

It never hurt when Mommy combed it.

CUT TO:

154 ANGLE - CARMICHAEL STOOP

CLOSE - CAROLYN

She looks into the camera as she talks to her daughter, the
last letter she wrote her.

CAROLYN

Dear Ladybug, How are you?
I miss you so much. I still
can't believe you just turned
10. All of you kids are
growing up so rapidly. Soon
the nest will be completely empty.

CUT TO:

155 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Carolyn sits in her barber's chair with her daughter between her legs combing her AFRO with a pick.

CAROLYN

Ladybug, you turned out pretty good considering you were raised in a house full of ashy rusty butt boys.

The Mother pauses.

CAROLYN (contd)

Poor Woody, I don't know what will become of him. Bless his heart.

MATCH CUT TO:

156 INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

We are back to the PRESENT. Troy continues to pick out her youngest brother's AFRO.

ANGLE - WINDOW

The Possums looking in.

POSSUMS

Can Joseph come out to play?

CLOSE - TROY AND JOSEPH

He looks up at his sister.

TROY

Go 'head, but dinner's almost ready, so don't go too far.

Joseph runs out.

157 EXT. STOOP - AREAWAY

From her stoop Troy watches her brother run down the block. We can hear someone yelling...

VOICE

Hot peas and butter. Better come and git yo' supper.

CLOSE - TELEVISION SCREEN

157 CONTD

SOUL TRAIN is on, and the host talks:

DON CORNELIUS

And, that ought to hold you for
a little while anyway. We thank
our guest stars Curtis Mayfield,
The Honeycombs, The Persuaders, and
of course The Soul Train Gang.
We're going to ask you to be right
where you are next week when we
return. And you can bet your
last money, it's all going to be
a stone gas honey. I'm Don Cornelius
and as always in parting we wish
you LOVE, PEACE, and SOUL!

The television is clicked OFF, SCREEN GOES TO BLACK.

ROLL END CREDITS